

**GLOBALIZATION AND THE UNEVEN APPLICATION OF  
INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY STANDARD: THE CASE OF OIL  
EXPLORATION IN NIGERIA**

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## **Abstract**

This study examines how the uneven application of regulatory standards in oil exploration and extraction in Nigeria has exacerbated ethnic and class tensions and how the oil exploration activities have affected the individual and collective lives of the people in the Niger Delta region. Overall, the study links the individual and collective lives of Nigerians, particularly people in Obelle and Obagi communities to the political economy of global capital. Furthermore, the study explores how the expansion and activities of global capital necessarily create ethnic tension, class struggle, and gender inequality. In order to maintain the status quo, global capital creates structural inequalities that divide societies into hierarchies of the “rich” and the “poor.” The study also examines the strategies adopted by the people to ameliorate negative consequences of oil exploration in the communities.

In this study, the researcher posits that there is a relationship between the uneven application of international and national regulations in oil production by MNCs and environmental degradation as well as the negative effect on people’s live and means of livelihood, resulting in competition for scarce resources, which in turn have exacerbated ethnic conflict between and among communities. Consequently, the main questions addressed in the study focus on if, how, and why globalization, carried out through the activities of MNCs, affects ethnic tension, class struggle, and gender inequality. In order to address the questions, a critical ethnographic paradigm was used to explore and explain the processes of globalization that affect the people’s lives and means of livelihood. Since this study’s focus is on a neglected population (Obelle and Obagi communities), a critical ethnographic paradigm was used to speak on behalf of the

subjects as a means of empowering them by giving more authority to their voices. Consequently, this study has the possibility of not only speaking about the marginalization of the people of Obelle and Obagi communities and their livelihood but, also, speaking on their behalf in order to increase awareness of their present economic situation, aiming at the general improvement of their economic situation and quality of life. This study, therefore, provided the subjects an opportunity to articulate their economic problems and share their lived experiences in a region that has been devastated by the activities of oil MNCs.

Data were collected and analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The specific methods used in data collection included in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and observation. Analysis of the data was done by employing a variety of methods that includes a combination of descriptive statistics based on cross-tabulation, analysis of themes that emerged from in-depth interviews, and *Atlas.ti 5.0* qualitative analysis computer programme to show the relationship between variables that emerged from the study.

The results obtained from the study support the hypothesis that the oil MNCs in Nigeria, in partnership with the Nigerian government, have engaged in a process of resource exploitation that has resulted in economic expropriation, political disenfranchisement, social dislocation, anomie and environmental devastation, of the people of the Niger Delta and Obagi/Obelle in particular.

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## **Dedication**

To the memory of: My Dad Peter U. Adalikwu who lived his life for his children and ensured that they all achieved their potentials and desires. Dad, your encouragement and confidence in me has brought me this far. Thanks for laying a solid foundation. My Grandpa Paul Adie who believed I was smart and could do anything I set my mind on even when it did not feel that way. My brother Gregg Adalikwu who inspired me to greater heights.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country, the economic base of which has changed from agriculture to oil exploration. Political and economic forces at the international and national levels have contributed to the exacerbation of inequalities and ethnic divisions in Nigeria. The Niger Delta area of Nigeria, has been largely deprived of meaningful development since Nigeria's independence in 1960, and has also become the center of a tense triangular conflict between ethnic communities, the Nigerian government, and the oil producing multinational corporations (Adalikwu, 2005).

The exploration of oil in Nigeria and the Niger Delta region in particular, without adequate plans for the protection of the people and environment, has led to the continued damage and degradation of the natural environment, people's health, and their means of livelihood. There has been continuous and uncontrolled activity in the exploration and extraction of crude oil, which involves uncontrolled gas flaring, use of worn-out oil pipes, pipe blow outs, oil well/pipe leaks, and numerous oil spillages, all of which have contributed to environmental degradation that has led to the death of many people, including women and children. This trend constitutes part of an economic globalization<sup>1</sup> that is focused on profit making by MNCs at all cost.

A majority of women<sup>2</sup> in particular have been adversely affected by the unregulated activities of oil exploration and extraction, given their roles in the family and community. The responsibility of keeping the family together, nurturing, and providing basic sustenance for its members lies with the women. Consequently, women in the Niger Delta region have faced challenges in the performance of their traditional roles. Agriculture, which is their main source of livelihood, is no longer viable due to the degradation of the environment<sup>3</sup> and lack of attention paid to it.

It is in view of these trends that this study is focused on examining: 1) if and to what extent the activities of multinational oil companies in Nigeria, have exacerbated ethnic and class tensions/conflict; 2) how these activities have affected people's lives, particularly, women and poor men in the Niger Delta region, and 3) their strategy for coping with the detrimental consequences of oil exploration. It is the position of this researcher in this thesis that there is a systemic link between the uneven application of international and national regulations<sup>4</sup> to oil exploration by MNCs in Nigeria and environmental degradation. Additionally, the oil extraction strategies adopted by MNCs under economic globalization that focus on profit maximization at all cost further exacerbates the situation by robbing people of their means of livelihood, pitting groups against each other in competition for scarce resources, which in turn has exacerbated ethnic conflict between and among communities.

## **1.1 Background Statement**

The 46 years of Nigeria's existence as an independent state have been plagued with instability, coups and counter coups, economic crises, debt crises and long periods of

military rule. After attaining independence in 1960, there were hopes and aspirations for a brighter future for Nigeria by Nigerians and to some extent the international community. However, these hopes were dashed with claims of fraud and irregularities in government fuelled by ethnic cleavages that resulted in the disruption of the first Nigerian elections held in 1964/65. This civil unrest led to the first bloody military coup that occurred in January 1966 led by Major-General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi (Metz, 1991: 20). This was followed by four other military coups that resulted in military rule for 30 of the 46 years of Nigerian post-independence history. The ensuing instability fostered ethnic rivalry among Nigeria's people who are regionally, linguistically, and culturally diverse (Metz, 1991: 26; Manby, 1999: 5). Northern Nigeria, which primarily consists of Hausa speaking people, is dominated by the Islamic religion, and the south, which consists dominantly of Yorubas, Igbos, Ijaws, and about 250 other ethnic groups, is dominated by Christianity, with variations from state to state (Elabor-Idemudia, 1984: 1; Metz, 1991: 28-35; Manby, 1999: 5).

Nigeria's political and social instability, since the early stage of independence, coupled with the subsequent economic crisis over the years, resulted in mal-development in some regions of the country and the Niger Delta area in particular. While agriculture was the mainstay of Nigeria's economy in pre-colonial and colonial times, the discovery of oil in the late 1950s led to a gradual neglect of agricultural production to the point where the national revenue consists of 95 percent of oil production. Oil reserves are mostly located in the south and Niger Delta region of the country with the oil refineries located in the south and the north, where a pipeline was built to connect to the south (Elabor-Idemudia, 1984; Hajzler, 2000). The Nigerian



government, in its quest to become a key player in the global economy, changed its base from agricultural production to oil exploration and the extraction of crude oil, and subsequently, under pressure from the international community, promoted privatization as an economic strategy without adequate provision for the protection of the welfare of the majority of its citizens who relied on agrarian production for sustenance.

Multinational oil corporations (MNCs) took advantage of the tenuous socio-economic situation in Nigeria to exploit oil for profit maximization. In the process, oil exploration/extraction activities have violated the basic human rights of the people especially in the Niger Delta region. The resulting “diminished agricultural productivity and lack of viable local economies in the wake of environmental and social degradation caused by oil exploitation” (Clark et al, 1999: 10) have challenged women in this region, who used to sustain their families through farming and trading in agricultural and other goods; they have been forced to look for other sources of economic production to generate income for providing food for their families as part of their traditional roles.

Politically, power has never been shared equally among the various geo-political groups. When the British colonial administration departed from Nigeria, power was handed over to elites who were mostly from northern Nigeria, consequently, giving them more access to political power and economic resources. These elites favoured their own people while the majority of people from ethnic groups in southern Nigeria became marginalized, particularly the people of the Niger Delta, who had little control over the oil reserves found in the region (Elabor-Idemudia, 1999). These political dynamics led to a feeling of alienation among the peoples of southern Nigeria, as poverty, competition over scarce resources, high unemployment, and powerlessness became very rampant.

There was gross abuse of power by the ruling class, whereby the masses were denied access to the resources of the land, but with such extensive coercion that the situation nevertheless resulted in a state of uneasy calm. The resulting political and economic inequality between the peoples of Nigeria has culminated in ethnic rivalry and conflict.

Continued neglect and alienation of the citizenry led the Igbo ethnic group in the southeast of Nigeria to attempt to secede from the country in 1967. The secession movement was driven by an objective to self-actualize and express their unique identity in a country with various ethnic nationalities amalgamated into one by the British colonial administration. The attempt at secession can be said to be due to the effect of colonial domination that failed to appreciate the traditions of indigenous cultures coupled with the modifications of political structures in the 1950s and 1960s<sup>5</sup> that saw a reinforcement of cleavages that were based on ethnic and regional animosities as each region attempted to preserve its respective indigenous cultures (Metz, 1999:1). The ethnic cleavage was exemplified by the establishment of regional marketing boards and participation in regional politics resulting in ethnic loyalties as a ticket to winning a campaign and election to political positions in government (Adaliku, 1995). The secession attempt was followed by a three year Biafra-Nigeria civil war that resulted in many deaths and military intervention. Like the Igbos prior to and following independence, other minority groups in the Niger Delta region in contemporary Nigeria experienced marginalization and alienation from their means of livelihood. Consequently, the perception of prejudice by the people of the Niger Delta region has gradually occurred in view of the uneven application of the processes of development. Some scholars have argued that the processes of globalization have only brought

detrimental consequences to the indigenous communities by transforming their cultural, social, moral, economic, and political lives as well as degrading their environment and destroying their means of livelihood (Saro-Wiwa, 1992; Kabeer, 1994; Pearson, 1995; Giddens, 1999; and Sweetman, 2000).

The shift from agriculture to oil exploration has also resulted in considerable interest from the international community. Almost all of the oil exploration in Nigeria is controlled by multinational corporations (MNCs) such as Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (popularly known as Shell or SPDC), Elf (TotalFinaElf), Chevron, Mobil, Agip, Philips, Texaco, and Ashland. These corporations have increased their share of the oil sector in Nigeria, especially since the global economic crises of the late 1980s and the failure of Nigeria to repay its debt. The resulting implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in response to Nigeria's debt crisis and the renewal of the emphasis on privatization led to increases of trade and production. According to Saro-Wiwa, the relocation of MNCs to countries such as Nigeria "has had detrimental consequences for the local people and has not provided them with new economic opportunities and other progressive individual choices" (1992: 58-59). In view of the perceived alienation from land and marginalization from economic and political decisions that affect people's lives, the youths in the Niger Delta region have engaged in various forms of resistance to bring attention to oil exploration activities in the region.

Resistance<sup>6</sup> to the negative effect of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region became apparent with the formation of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People<sup>7</sup> (MOSOP) in the 1980s under the leadership of the late human rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa.<sup>8</sup> Other groups have since been formed with the most vocal in the last couple of

years being the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta region (MEND). In 2006, MEND's activities sent shock waves through the nation that were also felt internationally. In a quest for resource control and compensation for communities affected by oil exploration activities, members of the group have kidnapped and sometimes, killed foreign oil workers over the past year, demanding a greater share of the region's oil wealth and protesting against environmental degradation. The leadership of MEND has vowed to "change tactics, desisting from kidnappings and concentrate on acts of sabotage, including bombings, aimed at crippling the oil sector" (Shirbon, 2007: 1). The group has also stated that it will continue with various tactics until it succeeds in driving out the oil companies from the Niger Delta and permanently halting Nigerian exports to the world oil market (Shirbon, 2007).

## **1.2 Globalization and its Relationship to Development in Nigeria**

Globalization is a term that has a broad and elastic meaning, denoting "the process in which economic, financial, technical, and cultural transactions between different countries and communities throughout the world are increasingly interconnected, and embody common elements of experience, practice, and understanding" (Pearson, 2000: 36-37). The process of globalization deeply affects social, moral, cultural, political, and economic lives, and it is often defined in economic terms as an inevitable process over which citizens do not have control. Consequently, globalization can be seen as "the process whereby individual lives and local communities are affected by economic, political, and cultural forces that operate world-wide (Ashcroft et al, 2000: 110). (For in-depth definition and analysis of globalization, see Chapter 3, section 3.2.2).

Globalization enhances the ability of the multinationals to make production flexible and profitable. Production is spatially structured, with multinationals organizing their activities internationally in order to take advantage of different wage rates and different levels of unionization, to force employees to compete with each other and for MNCs to develop coherent global strategies of accumulation for maximum profit (Jary, D and Julia Jary, 1991), even when these strategies exacerbate ethnic tension, land alienation, and impoverish the local population. A central outcome of globalization is the increased ability of MNCs to relocate to countries of the South in order to take advantage of cheap labour, raw materials, and weak environmental laws.

Some analysts of globalization “embrace it as a positive feature of a changing world in which access to technology, information, services and markets will be of benefit to local communities, where dominant forms of social organization will lead to universal prosperity, peace and freedom” (Ashcroft et al, 2000: 110-111). Others however, “reject it as a form of domination by First World countries over Third World countries, in which individual distinctions of culture and society become erased by an increasingly homogeneous global culture and local economies are more firmly incorporated into a system of global capital. Consequently, it has become a teleological doctrine, which provides, explains and justifies an interlocking system of world trade Ashcroft, 2000: 111).

Although critical-globalists<sup>9</sup> have noted that globalization has often perpetuated poverty, widened material inequalities, increased ecological degradation, sustained militarism, fragmented communities, marginalized subordinated groups, fed intolerance and deepened crises of democracy, they have also noted that globalization has had a

positive effect in world per capita income since 1945, halving the proportion of the world living in abject poverty, increasing ecological consciousness, and possibly facilitating disarmament, while various subordinate groups have grasped opportunities for global organization (Scholte, 1996: 53 cited in Aschroft, 2000: 111-112).

From a gendered perspective, several scholars (Sweetman 2000; Giddens 1999; Panos 1999; and Pearson 1995) have highlighted the impact of globalization on women's lives and see it as an issue of gendered development because of the far-reaching implications it has for the lives of women (and men) living in poverty. Sweetman (2000: 3) also noted that the practices of MNCs in developing countries, particularly in the oil sector, "have been associated with resource and human exploitation as well as environmental degradation with negative consequences particularly for women." As an example in Nigeria, the Niger Delta region has remained a backward, neglected, and underdeveloped region of Nigeria as a consequence of oil exploration and exploitation by the MNCs and the Nigerian government over a period of four decades. The exploitative practices by the MNCs in their exploration of oil in the Niger Delta region, has degraded the environment and destroyed the people's means of livelihood (Zambia communiqué, 2000). Women whose main source of livelihood depends mostly on agriculture and creek fishing are affected by the activities of oil MNCs. This informs the main purpose of this study which examines how the uneven application of international and national regulatory standards in oil exploration and extraction has exacerbated ethnic and class tensions and how oil exploration activities have affected the individual and collective lives of community women and poor men in the Niger Delta region.

In order to contextualize ethnic conflict in Nigeria, Solomon and Leith (2001) have identified four underlying historical and cultural causes. The first cause lies in the geographic and demographic characteristics of the country that focus on how the colonial government merged about 250 ethnic groups together into one state and used three separate administrative regions to govern it. The second cause relates to the process of resource allocation and the economy that is hinged on the political tension created by unequal natural distribution of resources between regions. The southern region of Nigeria is well endowed with crude oil which forms 90 percent of Nigerian foreign exchange earnings and 80 percent Gross Domestic Product (GDP) yet its share of the revenue is negligible.<sup>10</sup> A third cause of ethnic conflict is religion, which has been a major divisive factor in Nigeria for decades with the Christian south afraid of the larger-populated Muslim north, while the “underdeveloped” north fears the better-educated and “more developed” south. The fourth cause is the authoritarian military governments. These governments have adopted a 'divide and rule' approach in order to stay in power and, consequently, flamed ethnic tensions, to draw attention away from their uses and abuses of governmental power.

Suberu (2001) sees ethnic conflict in Nigeria as also embedded in a contentious federal system that the United Kingdom bequeathed to the country at independence in 1960. Consequently, successive Nigerian governments have relentlessly centralized all revenue collection as the country's oil industry grew and then allocated this money to state and local governments using evolving “cake-sharing” formulas. In time, Nigerians became saddled with what Suberu terms “an intensely dysfunctional system of centralized ethno-distributive federalism” (Suberu, 2001: 6). All efforts to create a

bigger cake collapsed as regions, groups, and individuals engaged in frenzied competition to control the distribution of existing revenues. He further notes that the causes of ethnic conflict in Nigeria can be analyzed within the broad problems associated with revenue sharing, the struggle of minorities to create new states, the ramifications of Nigeria's "federal character"<sup>11</sup>, and the politics of conducting national censuses.

Halvard et al (2003:1-3) have also identified economic incentives and rent seeking as opportunities for violent conflict wherever there is an abundance of natural resources,<sup>12</sup> which in their view significantly increases the risk of conflict among groups anywhere in the world. The argument of Halvard et al is applicable to Nigeria with its abundance of crude oil in the Niger Delta region. This perspective, offered by Brisibe (2001), Suberu (2001), and Turner (1980) on ethnic conflict, show that the conflicts in the Niger Delta and in Nigeria as a whole are hinged on the exploration and exploitation of crude oil, the economic incentives derived from this activity, and groups seeking royalties from this natural resource.

The uneven application of international and national regulatory standards in oil exploration has intensified some of the existing inequalities and insecurities in the world today, particularly for the poor in developing countries (Panos 1999: 16). In the case of the people of the Niger Delta region, the specific effects of globalization for them needs to be analytic study in view of the fact that the region has become the cockpit of a tense triangular conflict between many ethnic communities, the oil producing MNCs, and the Nigerian government (Panos 1999: 16). During ethnic violence and conflict, residents usually flee the area out of fear for their lives. Families are often displaced and lose their



property and whatever meager source of livelihood they have. Women, at this point, tend to suffer the most because the responsibility for keeping the family together rests on them. They are often the ones caught in the midst of the ongoing civil unrest between the government or multinational oil companies and the poor masses. Prior to oil exploration in the Niger Delta, lineages retained control over the land with each member having access to cultivation rights over a portion of the land, either as a compound heads, who were often males, or as dependents. The patriarchal cultural practices and the subordinate position of women in Nigeria deprived them of ownership of land although they had usufruct<sup>13</sup> rights. Over the years, land has been held and managed at different levels of social organization, and control over land has been exercised through various types of rights, which may overlap. However, for the purpose of this study, attention is focused on the Land Use Act of 1978 and the Petroleum Act (formally known as Decree No. 51 of 1969).

The Nigerian Land Use Act of 1978 stipulates that all control over land in the territory of each state of the federation is vested on the governor of that state and such land shall be held in trust and administered for use and common benefit of all Nigerians (Manby, 1999). The Petroleum Act stipulates that the entire property and control of all minerals, mineral oils and natural gas in, under, or upon any land in Nigeria or territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Nigeria is vested on the federal government. The development of these resources has negatively affected access to farmland in the Niger Delta communities, which are virtually sitting on, and surrounded by oil wells and natural gas. People in these communities have lost access to land as their farmlands are often appropriated by the government and/or for the multinational

corporations (Metz, 1991: 12; Manby, 1999: 41). The activities of the multinational oil companies have further exacerbated the problem through the destruction of the ecosystem. Drinking water has been contaminated and people are exposed to all kinds of chemicals and oil spillage, as well as pipe blowouts that are hazardous to their health. Yet women in the area are expected to contribute unpaid labour to the household through agricultural production. They spend long hours on domestic labour and subsistence food production in polluted land with little or no help from spouses, sons, or brothers, who have gone in search of wage labour in the cities. The local women lack access to primary healthcare and have lost their source of economic independence due to land alienation. More over, when crises erupt between the government/oil companies and the masses, it is women who suffer physical, emotional, and mental torture. They are often displaced from their homes, lose spouses or male relatives, and suffer stresses and insecurities of daily life (Brisibe, 2001:6).

Although existing studies have addressed the issue of the erosion of women's economic importance in the Niger Delta region under colonialism (Amadiume, 1987, Ogundipe-Leslie, 1985, and Zack-Williams, 1985), oil exploration and exploitation by the MNCs (Clark et al., 1999, Ekine, 1999; Manby, 1999), its effects on women of Obelle and Obagi in the Niger Delta have never been studied. This study, explores this issue further through the use of feminist ethnography that elicits information from women narratives, or stories of their everyday life experiences, in the face of oil exploration in their communities. The ethnographic questions that are asked are designed to elicit information on how women's everyday experiences are affected by

global capitalism, class struggle, and ethnic tension and how these in turn affect the women's household economy.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The oil boom of the 1970s favoured the export of crude oil over agricultural production and export. The government received dollars from large sales of oil and, therefore, refrained from exploring alternative revenue sources such as export crops and agricultural development. A large number of middlemen and some women flourished on the bases of state connections (Turner, 1980: 201-5). Much of the wealth was geared towards conspicuous consumption and land acquisition. The state sector expanded dramatically as oil wealth financed infrastructure and industrial development. Moreover, the importation of food, clothing, and other consumer goods undermined indigenous production. Land alienation, pollution and disturbance of fishing grounds, labour shortages and high cost of labour, lack of credit and the need for cash in an import-dependent market led to a heightened sense of insecurity and marginalization of the masses, the majority of whom were women and children.

The insecure and uncertain situation of the local citizen has been further compounded by the uneven application of the regulatory standards in oil exploration. There is an inconsistent application of international regulations as different countries have different systems for allocating licenses for oil and gas exploration and different regulations of production. For example, Russia's oil and gas regulations are embedded in its Subsoil Law<sup>14</sup> and Production Sharing Agreements (PSAs)<sup>15</sup> (McKenna 2003: 122-124). In Egypt, petroleum exploration and production is governed generally by Law

No. 66 of 1953 on Mines and Quarries but each concession agreement must be ratified by a separate law, which has precedence over Law No. 66/53 (Helmy et al. 2001: 199-200; British Gas 2001: 204-205). Consequently, regulatory laws for the production of oil in Egypt are embedded in the Development Leases and Production Sharing Arrangements/Contracts (PSCs). Oil production in Nigeria is regulated by a number of laws, the most significant of which are the Petroleum Act of 1969<sup>16</sup>, the Oil in Navigable Waters Act of 1968<sup>17</sup>, and recently the Federal Environmental Protection Agency Act of 1988<sup>18</sup> (Duruigbo 2006: 9).

Nigerian laws governing the exploration and production of oil are highly generalized and lack specific enforcement mechanisms (Akanle, 1991: 110) and often, these laws have failed to keep pace with international agreements and standards. For example, the 1973 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, which was meant to replace the 1954 Convention, is yet to be incorporated into Nigerian law. Worthy of note also is the fact that the bulk of oil production in Nigeria occurs on land, where regulation is less developed (Duruigbo, 2006: 9).

Regulatory practices in the oil sector are not uniform all over the world. The implementation of regulation standards is different in the West compared to the South. For example, “oil companies’ operations in developed regions are usually accompanied by environmental impact assessments, social and environmental policies, accountability, and a great deal of efforts to appease the justified concerns of local communities; these practices are not exported to less developed regions, where little or no media attention is applied and where accountability is unheard of” (Ekpu, 1995: 57). For decades, oil companies have operated in the Niger Delta region with little or no accountability and

have colluded with repressive military dictatorships in exploiting Nigeria's oil wealth for the benefit of a corrupt elite (Duruigbo, 2006: 1). According to Wawryk (2003: 53), MNCs have failed over the years to observe minimum standards of human rights in their operations and Duruigbo (2006: 3) has noted that "under repressive military regimes, oil MNCs including Shell and TotalFinaElf have routinely failed to protect the environment, respect human rights or be responsible for community members in their areas of operation.

The uneven application of corporate standards and accountability by the oil MNCs, coupled with internal factors such as repressive military regimes and dictatorships in Nigeria have resulted in social pathologies in the Niger Delta region. One of the pathologies is the diminished agricultural production and diminished viable local economies (trading in produce and craft) due to the environmental and social degradation caused by oil exploitation and extraction in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, which have affected the lives of women, children and poor people generally (Clark et al., 1999: 10). This situation has been compounded by global capital and the activities of oil MNCs who have taken advantage of the unstable political and economic climate in Nigeria, a nation previously plagued by ethnic tension and conflicts.

Historical evidence indicates that African women's participation in economic life was deeply rooted everywhere on the continent prior to colonialism (Synder and Tadesse 1997: 75). The burden of food production generally fell to women before colonialism, and in most of Africa, women were and still are the backbone of rural farming (Pala-Okeyo 1985: 7-11; Aidoo 1998: 40-44). Profound changes came with colonialism and its attendant developmental point of view, technologies, and wage economy. Colonial rule,

rather than being a liberating factor for African women, contributed to their loss of status and their right to land as a result of land reform introduced by European administrators. The migration of men to the cities, where they were favoured with opportunities for education, employment, and access to resources, left the women to care for many dependents, such as children, elders, and the ill--without enough adult workers (Sen and Grown 1987; Nalini et al. 1997: 41).

Traditionally, women in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria held economically important positions in inter-regional trade and markets. They were the major labour sources on farms and were influential in traditional systems of local political and economic organization. In addition, women were also heads of households with economic power. However, all this changed with the advent of colonialism in Nigeria in the early nineteenth century. These changes are still being perpetuated through the activities of the oil MNCs. Women have lost their access to farmland and at the same time fishing creeks and ponds are constantly being polluted by oil spillage. Therefore, women in this region who sustained their families through farming and trading now face challenges in providing sustenance for their families. That the state of women in Nigerian society needs to be placed on an international social justice agenda speaks to the importance of this research topic. This study, therefore, focuses on the consequences of oil exploration, how local people are negatively affected and examines people's adopted strategy for coping with the situation.

## **1.4 Statement of Purpose**

To reiterate, this study seeks to examine if and how oil exploration and production implemented under globalization processes have exacerbated ethnic tension, gender inequality and their impact on the people of Obelle and Obagi in the Niger Delta. More specifically, the study's objective is to establish whether there is a systematic link between the uneven application of international and national regulatory standards in oil exploration and environmental degradation, ethnic tension, and gender inequality in those two communities. The four central objectives of this study are as follows:

- To determine if and how the uneven application of international and national regulatory standards in oil exploration in Nigeria and Niger Delta in particular has affected the individual and collective lives of people in the Niger Delta region.
- To determine the extent to which the activities of global capital as represented by the oil MNCs have impacted on gender relations, ethnic tension and class struggle in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
- To explore the extent to which the activities of the oil MNCs have affected Obelle and Obagi women's economic activities, particularly their household economy.
- To examine the strategies adopted by the women to cope and ameliorate negative consequences of oil exploration in the communities.

The research focuses on Obelle and Obagi peoples and uses a critical ethnographic approach to explore and explain the processes of globalization that affect women's household economy, and how these same processes take advantages of existing ethnic rivalry in the communities where the oil MNCs are located to further work against the improvement of women's economic situation.

As this study aims to establish the relationship between globalization, ethnic tension, gender and class struggle, the following propositions guide the research and analysis:

1. Economic globalization, which is the latest form of capitalist expansion, intensifies economic, social, and political inequalities by privileging the private over the public sphere and by marginalizing the actual and potential significance of the general population.
2. Political and economic forces at international and national levels have affected development trends in Nigeria and have resulted in persistent and continuous inter-and intra-ethnic conflicts and class struggle.
3. Gender based inequalities and household economic relations are a deeply contested terrain in which access to economic and environmental resources remains a bitter source of conflict and a source of social division in the family and society.

### **1.5 Research Methods and Role and Location of Self within this Study**

The research methods employed in this study are qualitative and quantitative. Both surveys and in-depth interviews were used to elicit information from women in Obelle



and Obagi communities of the Niger Delta region. For the survey, questionnaires were administered to both men (100) and women (100) of the two ethnic groups in the two communities and were used for comparative analysis of the different variables of respondents, for example, gender, age, ethnic groups or social classes. It was also useful in the analysis and understanding of patterns of differences between the two populations; for example, differences in the way Obelle and Obagi communities are affected by the activities of the oil MNCs as well as the patterns of ethnic tension and conflict in the two communities.

In-depth interviews were carried out with women (20) only as respondents, and included two traditional leaders from each of the communities. The significance of this method of data collection lies in the fact that analysts cannot observe everything including feelings, thoughts, and intentions or behaviour which might have taken place before the study; consequently, interviewing makes it possible to enter into other people's perspective in order to find out from them the things analysts cannot directly observe (Patton, 1990).

My role in this study is primarily that of a researcher; and, my location is that of an outsider. Although I am a member of an ethnic group in the Niger Delta region, I do not belong to either of the two ethnic groups (Ikwerre and Ogba) that are the focus of this study. Nevertheless, as indigenes of the Niger Delta region, we have at one point or the other been affected by the activities of the oil MNCs. Therefore, the use of qualitative methods in this study enables me to take advantage of my insider's location in interaction with the participants, thereby minimizing the distance between me, as the researcher and the participants. This is in view of the fact that a close association

between a researcher and participants is desirable and important in the production of knowledge that is dependent upon gathering detailed information from other people.

In my role as a researcher, I employed a critical ethnographic perspective in an attempt to raise awareness about the situation of Obelle and Obagi women, negate the repressive influences of the alliance between the Nigerian government and oil MNCs, and invoke a call to action that might lead to social change and aid the emancipation of women, children and poor men in the region from the negative consequences of oil exploitation and extraction (Creswell, 1994). Giving the women an opportunity to speak about their experiences of the effects of oil exploration and extraction provides an outlet through which the women could begin to challenge and resist the negative consequences of oil exploration. The women's voices for me constitute a courageous act of agency and resistance to the alliance between the Nigerian government and oil MNCs that has alienated them from their land and means of livelihood, and created more challenges to their traditional roles as providers of sustenance and nurturers for their families.

In analyzing the data, I made concerted efforts to maintain a critical distance, in view of my location and role in this study. Given the subjective and political nature of the research, it was difficult to be successful in this endeavour, yet I did not have to impose pre-existing interpretations. Although I had intended this research to be a conduit for the voices of the women who participated, it is my voice and interpretations that have ultimately shaped the final product. In doing research of this nature, my biases in data collection and analysis cannot be ruled out in view of my membership in an ethnic group in the Niger Delta region. I had to practice de-familiarization (Thomas 1993: 4), which involved stepping back from the data that were collected and challenging myself to

examine it from different perspectives. Therefore, my influence on every aspect of the research had to be critically examined (Thomas 1993) because it shaped what questions I asked the participants and the comments and analysis I have made.

## **1.6 The Research Setting**

In order to examine and carry out a critical analysis of the relationship of the effects of the uneven application of the international and national frameworks of regulatory standards in oil production, this study focuses on Obelle and Obagi communities in Rivers State, which is located in the heart of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

### **1.6.1 The Study Area**

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is the focal area of my study because its rich mineral resource (crude oil) has become its nemesis. The Niger Delta region, located in southern Nigeria, is one of the world's largest wetlands, the largest in Africa, and consists of a combination of complex ecological zones of wetlands and dry lands covering an area of about 70,000 square kilometers, that spreads across eight of the 36 Nigerian states (Shellnigeria, 2001). The Niger Delta region includes the states of Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Edo, Akwa Ibom, Ondo, Abia and Imo States. According to Elabor-Idemudia (1999: 7), the "Niger Delta region has about 6,000 square kilometres of mangrove forest and also a high biodiversity typical of extensive swamp and forest areas, with many unique species of plants and animals." The population of the Niger Delta is about 7 million people and is growing at about 3 percent per year. There are more than 20 ethnic groups in the area with links to the linguistic groups of Ijaw, Edo, Igbo, Delta-cross, and Yoruba, and we find within these groups, the Ikwerre and Ogba

ethnic groups in Rivers State, who formed the target population of this research from the Obelle and Obagi communities respectively.

### **1.6.2 Obelle Community**

Obelle Community is one of the major towns in the Emuoha Local Government Area (EMOLGA) of Rivers State, lying in the eastern part of the local government. It is one of the communities making up the Ikwerre ethnic group. It is bounded in the north by Elele and in the east by Isiokpo. To its west, are located Rumuji and Rundelle and in the south, is Ibaa. It is about 55 kilometres away from Port Harcourt. Obelle community is made up of fourteen (14) villages, namely: Omuiyoro, Omuwoka, Omorila, Omuwoke, Omusukwuta, Omuagiri, Omuwosuu, Omuiba, Omuagala, Omuechi, Omuoda, Omuiker, Omuigwhor and Omuaua. The population of Obelle at the 1991 census was 31, 622. The area falls within the fresh water swamp of the Niger Delta area with its land being bountifully watered by major ponds, making the land viable for agriculture. Obelle Community has enormous natural resources like crude oil, palm trees, rubber plantations, raffia palms, and timber.

The people of Obelle are mainly farmers, and agriculture is extensively practiced. About 90 percent of the entire population is engaged in some sort of farming, and agriculture is geared towards production of food for local consumption. Some members of the community are also engaged in fishing and hunting to supplement household meat/protein requirements. Agricultural cultivation is generally done manually with the bulk of the labour supplied by the household. In the past, no manure was required or applied to crops except the use of household refuse, which was occasionally applied to a

few crops. Currently, there is a reliance on the use of fertilizers if the farmers expect to harvest any crops. The traditional farming practice in this area was shifting cultivation or land rotation but currently, the practice is crop rotation. This shifting cultivation which involves abandoning a piece of land at the end of the farming season to be revisited after some years of fallow, was used extensively when a vast area of land was available to enable the farmers to carry out this practice effectively. With time and with a shortage of land, the practice has evolved with a reduction in the fallow period, which does not allow the soil enough time to replenish. Some farmers or families who are land-handicapped often travel long distances to other villages in search of land for rent.

Crude oil was discovered in Obelle in 1963, six years after it was first discovered in Oloibiri in 1957. There are about nine oil wells in Obelle, located at Omuiba and Omusukwuta, known as “Obelle Flow Station,” in addition to other locations such as Omuikea, Rem, Ruter, Rim, and Rumuekini. About 50 percent of the total output in the local government (Emolga) is produced from the Obelle Flow Station. It is worth noting here that, since the inception of the oil flow station facilities, there have been five major oil spillages, which have resulted in the destruction of aquatic habitat, fish farm facilities, and plants including farm crops.

### **1.6.3 Obagi Community**

Obagi is a community in Egi land in the Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State and is one of the communities that constitute the Ogba/Egi ethnic group. It is bounded on the north by Egbema and on the south by Ekpeye. To its east are the Sombreiro river and Ohaji and on the west are the Orashi River and Ndoni as well as

Aboh. Obagi has a population of about 20,000 people and is about 54 kilometers from Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State. As in Obelle, members of this community are mainly farmers, and some also engage in fishing in order to augment their meat/protein supply. The traditional agricultural practice here also follows the shifting cultivation pattern, and the farmers rely mainly on manual labour supplied by family members. Agricultural production is mainly for subsistence and local consumption. The first oil exploration in Obagi was in 1962 by Elf, which was then known as Sapien Oil Company. This company has undergone several transformations and changed its name in 2000 to TotalFinaElf in order to reflect the merger between the Total Oil Company and Elf Oil Company. Subsequently, the name was changed again in 2003 to Total Oil Company, which is estimated to produce about 60, 000 barrels of crude oil per day from Obagi (Brisibe, 2001).

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This study seeks to examine and explore the factors that are militating against the new economic and social opportunities that global capital promised southern Nigeria, particularly communities like Obelle and Obagi where oil MNCs export large quantity of crude oil every day.

A study that provides explanations for the above mentioned phenomena, will provide political actors, as well as decision makers, in multi-ethnic states such as Nigeria, with suggestions on how best to harness their natural resources, to ensure a harmonious relationship among the ethnic groups, to propose and implement better trade policies that

will ensure the protection of its citizens from foreign exploitation, and at the same time to ensure an equitable business environment for foreign investors.

This study provides a basis on which a more detailed study of the phenomenon could be conducted in the future to include other communities in the Niger Delta besides Ogoni and Ijaw. This study will add to the existing knowledge and literature in sociology in general and in particular to ethnic relations and conflict under globalization.

### **1.8 Limitations/Challenges of the Study**

It is known that any research that has human subjects is usually problematic since a researcher has to deal with ethical, moral, language, and socio-political issues, among others. Consequently, the fieldwork that involved administering questionnaires to individuals and conducting interviews with people other than my ethnic group had its problems. Since the interviews were conducted across ethnic groups, language was a basic problem. It was not easy administering questionnaires to people or interviewing people who could not read or write in the English language, which was the medium of communication. To solve this problem, field assistants were employed from the two ethnic groups used as the target population for the study. Also, two of the women who were interviewed could not speak English and were encouraged to use the “pidgin” English, which I understand and speak.

Once on the ground in the field location, field assistants were recruited. This was a very difficult task because the plan was to recruit students from the University of Port Harcourt who were indigenes of the target population. However, upon arrival at Port Harcourt, it was found that the universities were closed. Consequently, a professor at the

University of Port Harcourt was called upon to help with some contacts, and eventually the first field assistant who was also a student of the University of Port Harcourt was recruited from Obelle.

The plan of this study was to use one community each from the Ikwerre and the Okrika ethnic groups. However, this changed when it was discovered, with the help of the field supervisor, that choosing any Okrika community would not give the necessary information that was needed as there was no actual oil well or flow station in Okrika. Consequently, after conferring with my thesis supervisor, an Ogba community in Egi land was chosen.

The selection of participants also proved to be difficult as many people who could participate claimed they were too busy to care. However, with the help of one of the community leaders, who was the first to be interviewed and one of the field assistants, the required number of participants both for the interview and survey in Obelle were recruited.

Collecting data in a developing country such as Nigeria led us to encounter problems of skepticism and apathy. Skepticism emanates from suspicion about the intentions of the researcher and the ultimate purpose of the study. The collection of the data for this study was met with suspicion, which was heightened by the incessant crises that have plagued communities in the Niger Delta region who protest the negative impact of oil MNCs on their lives and land.

Members of the field research of this study were accused by the indigenes of working for the government and the oil companies. The accusation became a major



setback in Obagi, as there was a delay in carrying out the interviews and distributing the questionnaires. Having recruited an assistant who was on forced holiday since his university, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, was closed, he was introduced to the task at hand and briefed on what was required of him in accomplishing the fieldwork in the community. As a result of ill health from the experiences in Obelle, I could only spend a night in Obagi and the other members of the research team were asked to begin the process of distribution of the questionnaires and recruitment of participants for the interviews while I went to Port Harcourt for some medical treatment since there was no hospital in the community. The distribution of questionnaires and recruitment of participants for the in-depth interviews did not take place until I returned to Obagi one week later to find out that the whole community was against the fieldwork because there was a general belief that the research team was working for the government and the oil company. Consequently, there was a lack of trust in what we were doing in their community. This issue was resolved by giving the community the assurance that we were not government agents or personnel in the oil sector. In addition to the letters previously written, the research team had to be formally presented to the community leaders, who now appealed to the people and encouraged them to participate. Our student identity cards were also shown in order to confirm that this study was for academic purposes only. The confidentiality provided by the questionnaire and interview schedule gave participants greater assurance since they were not required to write or mention their names; finally, the field research commenced after two weeks of being in the community. The most interesting thing about this was that some of the participants still felt the research team was working for the government and the oil companies; this is reflected in the responses from some of the interviewees such as Interviewee Number

14. When asked for her suggestions to curb ethnic/communal conflicts, the interviewee stated: “To settle the village fine.” When asked, “Who will settle the village?” the response was “You people, the oil companies,” indicating that we were considered personnel of one of the oil companies. Again, introducing the research team to her and explaining the purpose of the research countered this misapprehension.

At the Shell Petroleum Development Company flow station in Obelle; the security guard at the gate physically harassed the research team. He pushed and shoved us, snatching our camera and threatening to destroy it. Intervention from his colleagues and the presentation of student identity cards did not help the situation. However, he eventually returned the camera on the condition that we did not take any photographs of the flow station. There was no way we could leave Obelle without some pictures of the company that was one of the subjects of the study, so with the help of one of the field assistant, we negotiated with the security guard who later permitted us to take some photographs but from outside the gate/fence of the flow station.

At the beginning, respondents were uncooperative because their expectations from previous studies in their communities had not been fulfilled. For example, we were told that TotalFinaElf Oil Company had taken some blood samples from some members of the community on the pretext that they were checking the impact of their activities on the health of the local population. However, nothing had been done or said about the outcome of that investigation. Therefore, there was a feeling of apathy on the part of the community members and much persuasion had to be used before respondents accepted to cooperate by filling out the questionnaires and being interviewed.

Although funding was one of the major constraints in this study, carrying out a field study was very crucial to this dissertation for the following reasons. It enabled the researcher to examine directly the situation in the communities, use a triangulation method of data collection which included observing the participants in their natural setting, and to conduct face-to-face interviews which made it easy to probe further and in some instances digress from the main questions in order to capture participants' attitudes and feelings towards their perceived economic situation. The field study, therefore, enabled the researcher to examine their difficulties as they grappled with their daily lives in view of the effect of the activities of the oil MNCs in their communities.

In order to accomplish the task within a given time frame, members of the research team went about the communities extensively. Interviews were conducted mostly in the evenings and at night using flashlights to navigate the way. Interviews were conducted at these times because during the day almost all the participants went about their daily chores of providing food and sustenance for their families and could not afford to sit down for an interview. One of the profound experiences from this exercise was the challenging sights the research team saw and horrendous stories heard. The research team experienced cracks in the walls of people's homes, the crackly noise from the roofs as a result of gas flares, the dirty water from the wells, the vibration of houses near oil wells (which were mostly situated close to people's homes) and the sad stories of how the lives of the people have been negatively impacted in the Niger Delta.

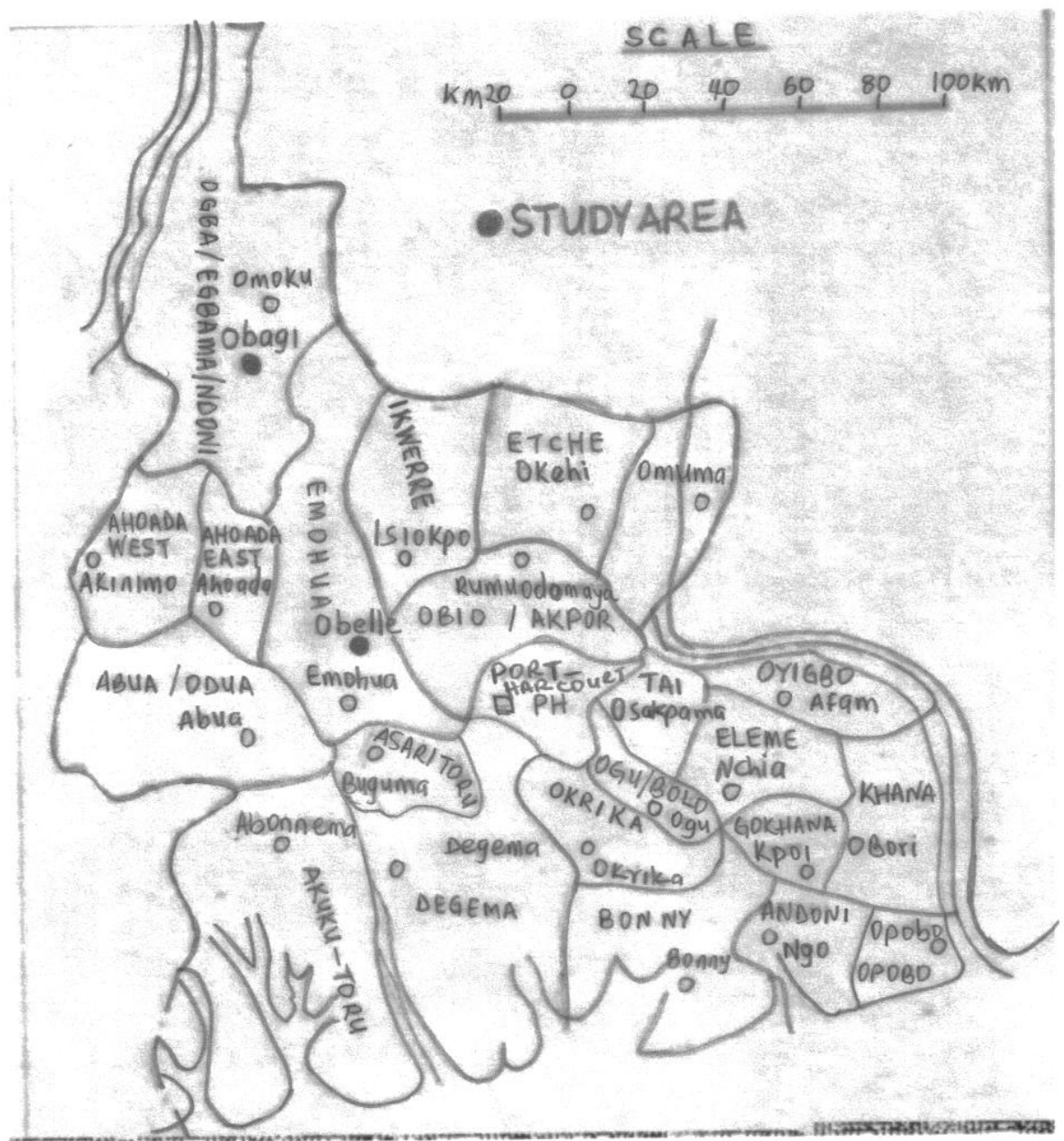
The information gathered from the field research and the subsequent analysis cannot be generalized to other communities in and outside the Niger Delta region because the activities of oil MNCs affect each community in peculiar ways and the communities in

turn react differently to the effects of the activities of oil MNCs in their land. However, it should be noted that there may be some similarities in the effects and responses from people in other communities towards the oil MNCs. Consequently, the findings of this study, though not generalizable, can provide useful points of reference for further and more comprehensive studies in other geographical areas.

## **1.9 Organization of the Study**

Chapter 1 of this thesis consists of a background statement of the study, the purpose of the study, and a description of the target population for the study. Also included in the chapter are the significance, propositions, limitations/challenges of the study and an outline of how the whole thesis is organized. Chapter 2 provides an outline of the context within which oil exploration takes place. It includes a brief historiography of Nigeria including the amalgamation of the various ethnic kingdoms into present day Nigeria, the changing political and economic climate, and how in turn these have affected the nation in terms of class, ethnic, and gender relations. Chapter 3 is a review of relevant literature and highlights the theoretical framework employed in this study. Chapter 4 outlines the quantitative and qualitative methods used in data collection, as well as the methods of data analysis of the study. Chapter 5 involves the analysis of the quantitative data, using frequencies and cross tabulation. Chapter 6 is an overview and analysis of the qualitative data. The chapter examines how oil exploration and extraction in the Niger Delta region has brought about marginalization, alienation from land, economic hardship, environmental degradation, pollution of the land, water, and air, and health issues for the local population, particularly in Obelle and Obagi communities. Chapter 7 summarizes the research findings based on the analysis of quantitative and

qualitative data. The concluding section of chapter 7, presents a brief explanation of the Niger Delta women's resistance to the activities of the multinational oil companies who operate in alliance with the Nigerian government and the women's strategies for coping with the detrimental consequences of oil exploration and extraction. As well, some recommendations were presented as formulated by the researcher.



**Map of Rivers State showing Port Harcourt, and the local government areas where Obelle and Obagi are located**

Source: <http://www.rivers-state.gov.ng/map.htm>

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- <sup>1</sup> Economic globalization entails the organization of global capital without much consideration for the well being of the local communities and it is based on mass production and consumption of goods and services. See Chapter 3, section 3.2.2 for a detailed analysis.
- <sup>2</sup> Note that both men and women, particularly in poor rural communities in developing countries are affected by the unregulated activities of oil MNCs.
- <sup>3</sup> See Clark et al., 1999: 10
- <sup>4</sup> Regulations here refer to the regulatory guidelines and prescriptive rules that govern oil extraction and protect the interest of all concerned stakeholders.
- <sup>5</sup> In 1957, the Western and Eastern regions became formally self-governing under a parliamentary system with the Northern region acquiring a similar status two years later. These regions were autonomous in relation to the federal government at Lagos. The autonomous government in the different regions intensified ethnic cleavages in the 1950s, resulting in the British government imposing a 'political solution' for Nigeria based on a federally structured constitution. New regions were subsequently created to ensure a voice for minorities as well as a step toward the formation of a unitary national government. This, however, did not solve the problem as identity and subjectivity were and are still issues in contemporary Nigerian society. See also Metz, (1991).
- <sup>6</sup> Although resistance to oil exploration is not the focus of this study, it is worthy to note that, the local citizens are not passive recipients of the negative effect of oil exploration in the region. MOSOP and MEND are two examples of resistance to the negative consequences of oil MNCs' activities in the Niger Delta region.
- <sup>7</sup> The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) is a campaigning organization representing the Ogoni People in their struggle for ethnic and environmental rights. Its primary targets, and at times adversaries, have been the Nigerian government and the oil company Royal Dutch Shell. MOSOP organizes in large part through sectoral organizations such as the National Youth Council of the Ogoni People and the Federation of Ogoni Women's Associations. MOSOP initiated its efforts with a bold declaration, the 1990 Ogoni Bill of Rights, addressed to the federal government. The Bill reads like a model statement before a mediator. It lists their concerns: oil-related suffering of their people, governmental neglect, lack of social services, and political marginalization. See: Kretzman, Steve, "Nigeria's 'Drilling Fields': Shell Oil's Role in Repression," *Multinational Monitor*, January/February 1995 (XVI:1-2).
- <sup>8</sup> As President of MOSOP, Saro-Wiwa led a nonviolent campaign against environmental damage associated with the operations of multinational oil companies, especially Shell. In May 1994, he was arrested and accused of incitement to murder following the deaths of four Ogoni elders. Saro-Wiwa denied the charges, but was imprisoned for over a year before being found guilty and sentenced to death. On November 10 1995, Saro-Wiwa and eight other MOSOP leaders (the "Ogoni Nine") were executed by hanging at the hands of military personnel. Many people have argued that his death was a strategy by the Nigerian government and Shell to silence the Ogoni people's resistance to the detrimental effect of oil exploration in their land.
- <sup>9</sup> Critical globalism takes a neutral view of the process, simply examining its processes and effects (Ashcroft et al, 2000: 111). It refers to the critical engagement with globalization processes, neither blocking them out nor celebrating globalization. Also, see Nederveen Pieterse, 1995.
- <sup>10</sup> Due to the 1980 Okigbo Report on the sharing of oil revenue, the federal government in 1981 promulgated the Revenue Allocation Act Number 1 of 1981, which in whole does not favour southern Nigeria, particularly, states from the Niger Delta region where 90 percent of Nigerian foreign exchange earnings and 80 percent Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from. For example, see the following revenue allocation formulae: Federal Government, 55 percent; State governments, 30 percents; Local governments, 8 percent; and 7 percent set aside as special funds for; 1] Development of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), 2.5 percent; 2) Special problems of mineral producing areas, 2 percent; and 3) Ecological problems, 1.5 percent; and Revenue equalization Fund, 1.5 percent.
- <sup>11</sup> This is an arrangement that brings together about four hundred ethnic groups, each of them with a different historical, cultural and social background. Such arrangement is not peculiar to Nigeria's political milieu; countries such as Canada and Australia adopt the same system. Note that there are usually vastly different administrative institutions and levels of economic development throughout the federation of Nigeria as can be found between provinces in Canada.

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- <sup>12</sup> See, Collier, P. and Anke Hoeffler, 2001. *Greed and Grievance in Civil War*. DECRG, World Bank.
- <sup>13</sup> Usufruct rights is a law that gives someone/group of people the right to utilize and enjoy the profits and advantage of property such as land, belonging to another person or group of people.
- <sup>14</sup> The Subsoil Law is one of two regulatory regimes provided by the Russian government for its oil and gas production. The Subsoil Law establishes a general licensing and administrative law regime under which federal and local authorities issue, amend, and terminate rights granted by the license. See McKenna, C. (2003) *The Regulatory Framework for the Oil and Gas Industry* in Marat Terterov (ed.) "Global Market Briefing: Doing Business with Russia" Pp. 122-126.
- <sup>15</sup> The PSAs is the second regulatory regime provided by the Russian government for its oil and gas production. The PSA Law establishes a quasi-contractual regime for production sharing agreements between the investor and federal and local governments. See McKenna, C. (2003) "The Regulatory Framework for the Oil and Gas Industry" in Marat Terterov (ed.) *Global Market Briefing: Doing Business with Russia* Pp. 122-126.
- <sup>16</sup> The Petroleum Act of 1969 replaced the original act of 1916. The Petroleum Act provides that the entire ownership and control of all mineral oils and natural gas in Nigeria, under land/water is vested in the federal government. The Petroleum Act led to the adoption of statutes mandating that the licensee and lessee of an oil exploration or prospecting license or mining lease adopt all practicable precautions to prevent the pollution of inland waters, rivers, water courses, the territorial waters of Nigeria or the high seas by oil, mud or other harmful fluids or substances, and where any such pollution occurs or has occurred, take prompt steps to control and if possible, end it. Akanle, 1991 noted that these provisions, embedded in the Act are highly generalized and lack specific enforcement mechanisms.
- <sup>17</sup> The Oil in Navigable Waters Act implements the 1954 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil. It provides for the regulations requiring Nigerian vessels to monitor discharge levels and stipulates fines for violators. The law has failed to keep pace with international agreements, notably, the 1973 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, which is meant to supersede the 1954 convention.
- <sup>18</sup> The Federal Environmental Protection Agency Act was established in response to worldwide public demand for legislative mechanisms to protect the environment (See Guobadia, Ameze 1993). The agency is responsible for the protection and development of the environment in general and environmental technology, including initiation of policy in relation to environmental research and technology. It also advises the government on environmental policy and establishes environmental criteria, guidelines, guidelines, specific actions or standards for the protection of the nation's air and interstate waters as may be necessary to protect the health and welfare of the population from environmental degradation (See Duruigbo, 2006).



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter highlights the historical context in Nigeria within which global capitalism impacts on various people. The rationale for including a historical review of Nigeria in this study is to aid readers in understanding the events highlighted in the discussions and also, how these events affect ethnic relations among and between groups and their relationship to the means of production. The chapter also focuses on the political and economic history of Nigeria and the effect this history has on contemporary political and economic structures and processes.

#### **2.2 Political History**

Turner (1980: 203) posits that in the first five years of Nigeria's independence (1960 – 1965), “politics, rather than entrepreneurship was the more attractive avenue open to the citizens for the accumulation of funds.” She further noted that the government was conceived more as a vehicle for distributing bounties than as an agent of economic development (Turner, 1980: 203). There is little wonder, then, that the government of the Eastern Region in the late 1960s called for secession from the rest of

the country in order to focus on the development of the region and the welfare of its citizens.

However, the secession move led to the Nigerian civil war that lasted from 1967 to 1970 and disputes continued in Nigeria over the years due to land, ethnic differences and the appropriation of oil revenue.<sup>1</sup> The marginalization of some ethnic groups in the distribution of the oil royalties led an ethnic group, the Ogoni in the Niger Delta, in the 1990s, to agitate for a share in the oil revenue accruing from the oil wells located in their communities. The government reacted to the Ogoni's demand by terrorizing them with arrests, rapes, executions, burning and looting. The violence ultimately culminated in the execution of the "Ogoni Nine" on November 10, 1995. This reaction by the government corroborates Turner's observation that "contemporary Nigerian politics are dominated by efforts to appropriate oil money (Turner, 1980: 211).

### **2.3 A Brief History of Nigeria**

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa and the tenth largest country by population in the world, is situated at the eastern terminus of the bulge of West Africa, on the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria has an area of 923,768.00 square kilometres, and lies entirely within the tropical zone between latitude 40 and 140 north of the equator and longitudes 30 and 140 east of the Greenwich Meridian<sup>2</sup>. Nigeria's national boundaries are the result of its colonial history -- as is the case with most African countries. It is bounded on the west by the Republic of Benin, on the north by the Republic of Niger, and on the east by the Federal Republic of Cameroon. On the northeast is Lake Chad and on the south, the Nigerian coastline is bathed by the Atlantic Ocean<sup>3</sup>. Its estimated

population of about 130 million, as of July 2000 (Stock, 2001), is representative of about 20 percent of the total African population and constitutes a number of distinct ethnic groupings that vary from 250 to as many as 400 with language as the most widely used marker of ethnicity<sup>4</sup>.

In the pre-colonial era, the economy of this region was traditionally based on agriculture and trade, but this changed profoundly under colonial rule. Frederick Lugard,<sup>5</sup> who became a high commissioner of the Northern and Southern protectorates,<sup>6</sup> had the task of transforming the commercial sphere of influence inherited from the Royal Niger Company into a viable territorial unit under effective British political control.<sup>7</sup> He succeeded in this task through his introduction of the “indirect rule”<sup>8</sup> system, which he extended from the northern protectorate to the south. As a consequence of the indirect rule policy, Hausa-Fulani domination was confirmed (and in some instances imposed) on diverse ethnic groups outside the northern domain. The revenues available to the colonial government limited the accomplishments of Lugard and his successors in economic development. Since there was a need to pay taxes to the colonial government, Nigerian farmers were forced to replace food crops with cash crops, which the government bought at low prices and resold at a profit (Stock, 2001). It was also decided to impose a head tax on women and domestic animals, a decision that resulted in the 1929 Aba women’s riot in protest of the colonial administrative policy. Economic progress was made through the construction of railroad lines that were used to transport mineral resources and agricultural products such as tin from Jos Plateau, peanuts and cotton from other northern states and cocoa, and rubber from the west to ports on the coast. The economic links among the regions increased, but the indirect rule

system used by the colonial administrators, whereby the regions were ruled through the use of traditional chiefs, tended to discourage political interchange between these regions.

Politically, northern Nigeria became a protectorate in 1900 while the South became a protectorate in 1906 both under Frederick Lugard as the high commissioner. Lugard's objective was to conquer the entire region and obtain recognition of the British protectorate by its indigenous rulers, especially the Fulani emirs of the Sokoto Caliphate. His success in weakening the resistance in the north with his military might made him conclude that military victories were necessary because the surrender in the north would also weaken resistance in the south. Lugard's indirect rule strategy in the south proved relatively easy in Yoruba land where the governments and boundaries of traditional kingdom systems were retained. In the southeast, the colonial administrators had crushed the Aro<sup>9</sup> domination of that region and the search for acceptable local administrations met with frustration. As a result, the tasks of government were initially left in the hands of colonial officials who antagonized many Igbos, because of the traditional egalitarian principles, which the Igbos used as a justification for their early opposition to colonial rule.

In 1912, Lugard, who had been appointed as governor of Hong Kong for six years, returned to Nigeria and set in motion the unification of the northern and southern protectorates. This became a reality in 1914<sup>10</sup> after a sub-division of the southern region into eastern and western regions. This unification involved only a loose affiliation of the three distinct regional administrations into which Nigeria was subdivided: northern, western, and eastern regions. The regions were virtually autonomous entities that had

overlapping economic interests but little in common politically or socially. In view of the overlap in the economy and dissimilarities in the political and social lives of the indigenous people, one can conclude that the aim of the unification of Nigeria was not to create a stable country but to promote a successful colonial trading station for the benefit of the colonialists.

In view of the British colonial economic policy<sup>11</sup> in Nigeria, agriculture was the main source of revenue for the colonial government. There were intense public works such as harbour dredging and road and railroad construction in order to open Nigeria to economic development, of which British soap and cosmetics manufacturers took advantage. There were improvements in port facilities and transportation infrastructure for the purpose of aiding the exploitation of the primary resources that were needed in British industries in the “motherland.”

Lugard bequeathed an economically prosperous Nigerian colony to his successors when his term expired in 1918. However, his success in the political arena was not as note-worthy. The lack of political success was partly related to the fact that he had a regional bias and was contemptuous of the educated and Westernized African elite<sup>12</sup>, and he even recommended transferring the capital from Lagos, the cosmopolitan city where the influence of the educated elites was most pronounced, to Kaduna in the north. Although the capital was not moved, Lugard's bias in favour of the Muslim north was clear at the time. The assumption that this favoritism is one of the bases of contemporary Nigerian ethnic rivalry has prevailed for many decades (Metz, 1991: 27 & 28).

The inconsistencies in British colonial policies in Nigeria resulted in cleavages based on regional animosities. These cleavages were an attempt to preserve the indigenous cultures of each area while simultaneously introducing modern technology and western political and social concepts to these areas. Therefore, the 1920s through 1930s saw the formation of regional associations particularly in urban centers, aimed at protecting and providing aid for migrants from ethnic homelands (Metz, 1991: 7). Also, the 1920s colonial administrative constitution, which provided for the election of a few indigenous representatives to the Legislative Council, became an opportunity for members of the regional associations to form political parties based on ethnic cleavages (Metz, 1991: 7-8). Consequently, political parties that were formed in the 1940s and 1950s became platforms for the agitation for Nigeria's independence from colonial rule (Metz, 1991: 8-10).

Nationalists in the south opposed the indirect rule system that silenced westernized elites who were critical of colonialism for its failure to appreciate the tradition of indigenous cultures. In the north, Islamic legitimacy upheld the rule of the emirs, and nationalist sentiments were decidedly anti-western. In the south as in other regions, the majority of people were tribalists who fought to preserve their indigenous culture and knowledge. This is seen as the beginning of ethnic rivalry and tension in Nigerian history, and ethnicity has continued to be the deciding factor of who gets what favours and who is marginalized.

On October 1, 1960 Nigeria became an independent country within the Commonwealth. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was installed as governor general of the federation while Tafawa Balewa served as the head of a democratically elected

parliament. In 1963, Nigeria became a republic within the Commonwealth, and Dr. Azikiwe, who had been governor general, became the first president of the Republic of Nigeria. After independence, proposals were made for the creation of states out of the regions in order to enable the restructuring of the country along ethnic lines. Of all the proposals submitted, only the midwestern region was added in 1963, in addition to the western, eastern, and northern regions with Lagos as the federal capital territory.

There were many irregularities in government fuelled by ethnic cleavages that resulted in the disruption of the first Nigerian elections held in 1964/65 (Metz, 1991). While there were agitations to fragment the northern region in order to weaken its power and control of a majority of the seats in the House of Representatives, there were also agitations to further fragment the western and eastern regions in order to give voice to minority groups in these regions (Metz, 1991). In the face of the disturbances, there were calls for Nigeria's armed forces to restore order; in January 1966, some army officers, most of whom were from the eastern region, attempted to seize power. In this confrontation, Tafawa Balewa<sup>13</sup> was assassinated in Lagos, Akintola in Ibadan<sup>14</sup> (western region), and Amadu Bello<sup>15</sup> in Kaduna (northern region) while Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe<sup>16</sup> (eastern region) was spared from the lawlessness because he was out of the country at the time. It was also later discovered that no easterner was assassinated in the coup because it was organized and carried out by officers who were mostly from that region.

Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi<sup>17</sup> emerged as the military leader who intervened and restored order to the country. His subsequent actions in the leadership position showed disregard for the nuances of regional politics, and he misjudged the

intensity of ethnic sensitivities in the aftermath of the January 1966 bloody coup. Consequently, there was a counter coup in July 1966. The restiveness in the country continued and culminated in a civil war after the failure of the January 1967 Aburi convention, which was convened to discuss the turmoil that resulted in Nigeria from the January and July 1966 coups<sup>18</sup>. One of the outcomes of the Aburi convention was the abolition of the three regions and the re-division of the country into twelve states in 1967 by Major General Yakubu “Jack” Gowon<sup>19</sup> who had succeeded Aguyi-Ironsi after the July 1966 coup. The re-division of the country continued when an additional seven states were added in 1976 by General Murtala Ramat Muhammad<sup>20</sup> (who emerged as another leader after the ousting of Gowon) bringing the total to 19 states, which have over the years increased to 36 states including the federal capital territory, Abuja.

## **2.4 Traditional Household Economy**

Traditionally, women in Africa, particularly those in Nigeria, and specifically in the Niger Delta/eastern region of Nigeria, predominated in the subsistence economy (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1985; and Amadiume, 1987<sup>21</sup>). Most social and domestic responsibilities fell to the women. Girls married very early, often at the age of 12, in this region and, immediately after marriage, devoted their time and energy to the subsistence sector and domestic responsibilities. According to Amadiume (1987: 21) “Women here were and still are involved in both local and external trade as the farm does not meet their subsistence needs.”

Land in the Niger Delta region as in other regions in southern Nigeria has been “the most visible scarce resource for subsistence farming” (Amadiume 1987: 34) and is



usually owned by men; however, women who have sole responsibility for taking care of the family subsistence needs, work it. Therefore, access to farmland was and still is essential to women's roles as wives and daughters. In the household, a wife's domain was a matricentric unit, consisting of herself and her children living on a specific farm; it was therefore, a farming and/or fishing unit. The processing, sale, storage, and preserving of all foodstuffs were done exclusively by women. Marketing--buying and selling, selling and buying--was a woman's job, and women also played a vital part in the production of food-crops like cassava, coco-yam, plantain, maize, and melon, in addition to catching fish, and raising livestock. Since women were the marketers, they had exclusive control of the market space where they sold their produce. The women kept their profits and whatever else was considered theirs, giving them control of goods and cash, and thereby making them economically independent.

In the traditional household economy, a woman's garden was a regular source of subsistence, which included vegetables and spices used in the household or sold in the markets. Women's involvement in agricultural production and their control of the subsistence economy gave them easy access to markets and cash, which was put back into the subsistence economy (Amadiume, 1987: 39). As a result of the redirection of money into subsistence and household-needs, a woman had to be extremely successful economically, in part, because this led to social and political recognition in the community (Amadiume 1987: 39). Also, the state of being a wife had some benefits, which included access and right to farmland. Consequently, wifhood ensured that when a woman became a widow, she would not lose her means of subsistence. Although feminists have criticized widow inheritance<sup>22</sup> (that is when a brother or other male

member of the family inherits a deceased brother's wife) as a form of bondage, it was put in place in these communities to ensure that a young widow of childbearing age could still bear children in her late husband's name. It was also hoped that widow inheritance will ensure that elderly, and therefore presumably no longer sexually attractive or biologically reproductive women did not find themselves without "husbands" or homes but could remain viable members of the complex compound or extended family.

Nigeria's traditional household economy changed with the advent of colonialism in Nigeria in the early nineteenth century. The colonial administration in Nigeria suppressed indigenous institutions, imposed Western education and religion, and introduced a new economic system, among other things (Zack-Williams, 1985; and Knowles, 1985). These new institutions greatly affected the structural position of women in the Niger Delta region in that they lost their social and political status, as well as their economic power. For instance, "the indigenous social and political institution of the goddess religion that acknowledged female economic success and independence and rewarded female industriousness with the chieftaincy title was banned" (Amadiume 1987: 123). Women in the Niger Delta region became helpless in the face of the new colonial institutions. According to Amadiume (1987: 132), women in the Niger Delta region in general "were neither more comfortable nor more advantaged from an economic point of view under colonialism. They had lost their grip on the control of liquid cash; as men invaded the general market, and they became helpless in their personal relations with their husbands."

The Western type of education introduced by the colonial authorities taught women cooking, cleaning, childcare, and sewing; these domestic services neither had formally recognized economic value nor brought the women any form of economic independence. The new economic structure was supported by the inculcation of sexist ideology in the mission schools (Van Allen 1976: 80). From this ideology was derived the expression “a woman’s place is in the home.” Furthermore, the ideology idealized the virtuous and frail-minded female as incapable of mastering or performing “masculine” tasks and the manifestation of these ideologies and practices resulted in prejudice and the exclusion of women from the colonial political administration. The political and economic frustration felt by the women led to mass protests and rioting by women from all over Nigeria at various times, significant among which was the Aba women’s riot of 1929<sup>23</sup>.

The effect of colonialism on the economic position of women in the Niger Delta region has been expressed in two broad views. The first view argues “there was economic ascendancy of these women from 1880 to the early twentieth century due to the expansion of overseas trade in palm oil and other agricultural produce” (Ifeka-Moller, 1975: 136). The other view does not support such a late emergence of wealthy women traders. Amadiume (1987: 140) argues that the economic and political prominence of women in the indigenous communities in the Niger Delta region was due to their participation in the production and sale of palm oil and palm kernel much earlier in the nineteenth century. In other words, colonialism did not improve women’s economic position but eroded what existed, thereby depriving the women of their economic power and independence. Okigbo (1965: 418-419) and Van Allen (1976: 78-

9) argue that it was colonial rule, a strong cash economy, and European firms (MNCs) that undermined women's economic and political power. Corroborating this view, Amadiume (1987: 136-142) and Knowles (1985: 71-9) observed that it was under colonial rule that women suffered a reversal in their economic and political power. Although there was an increase in the involvement of women in long distance trade at this time, the establishment of European firms and factories with a monopoly over certain commodities and the pricing system these firms and factories put in place disadvantaged the women competitors. There is no doubt that a few wealthy women in urban centres who acted as middle women for the European firms emerged, but for the great majority of women, "the accumulated surplus remained small, often providing only subsistence" (Van Allen 1976: 78).

Just as colonialism impacted on development in Nigeria between 1893 and 1960 prior to obtaining independence from Britain, the oil MNCs in Nigeria have perpetuated what the colonialists started, and, as noted in Amadiume (1987), women who were economically independent are now left with limited access to resources to take care of themselves and their families. The deteriorating household economic position in the Niger Delta region has been attributed in large part to the "pollution arising from careless and unmonitored oil production" (Hajzler 2000: 78). Hajzler (2000: 78) and Clark et al (1999: 9-11) have also observed that oil production in Nigeria has resulted in severe strains placed on agriculture, fishing, and economic stability as a whole, with severe consequences to the social and political environment. The stagnation of the agricultural sector in Nigeria is due to Nigeria's sole dependence on oil products and exports, which has been entrusted to the multinational conglomerates with the financial

and technical means to invest in the oil sector. The impact of this situation on the household economy is significant because, “Nigeria as a nation has remained a developing country with a per capita GNP of only US \$ 260 a year” (Elabor-Idemudia 1999: 1; Hajzler 2000: 78).

## **2.5 The Economy of Nigeria**

Until 1970, agriculture was the mainstay of the country’s economy and provided employment for the bulk of the population and supported economic development prior to Nigerian’s political independence (Elabor-Idemudia, 1984). It contributed more than 70 percent of export earnings before 1970 and the rural economy that supports most Nigerians is based on the productivity and fertility of the land that is generally very poor. Since the 1970s, agriculture has stagnated due primarily to the discovery of oil and, the resulting oil boom of the 1970s profoundly transformed Nigerian society from one based on agricultural export to one based on the export of crude oil.

The development of the oil industry in the 1960s and 1970s made “Nigeria the largest oil producer in Africa and the fifth largest in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)” by the mid 1970s (Hajzler 2000: 76). Consequently, oil exploration has become a major source of national income earning in the past three decades and accounts for over 80 percent of the GDP and 90 percent of foreign exchange earnings (Panos, 1999). This mineral resource is found mostly in the Niger Delta region, Nigeria.

The military regimes of Murtala Muhammad (July 1975 to February 1976) and Lieutenant General Olusegun Obasanjo<sup>24</sup> benefited from a tremendous influx of oil

revenue that increased by 350 percent between 1973 and 1974, when oil prices skyrocketed, and continued on an increase until 1979, when the military stepped down in favour of a new elected civilian government under President Shehu Shagari<sup>25</sup>. The increase in revenues from the sale of oil permitted massive spending that was poorly planned and highly concentrated in urban areas. While there was a rapid rise in income, especially for the urban middle class, there was also a corresponding inflation due to the revenue from the oil boom. The price of food, in particular, rose dramatically, and later resulted in a shift from export crops to food crops. Consequently, there was a decline in agricultural production as the main export earner, and Nigeria's export became dominated by oil. By the time the oil boom ended in the mid 1980s, there were many signs of tension in the country and to reduce people's apprehension, an irrigation scheme was proposed in northern Nigeria to boost agriculture in that region.

The irrigation scheme known as the "Bakalori Project" was carried out in the late 1970s in Sokoto State in order to boost large-scale farming for agri-businesses. The project resulted in a protest by thousands of farmers who lost access to their farmlands that were their only means of livelihood; the police retaliated by burning villages and killing or wounding thousands of people. The Bakalori incident was still fresh on people's minds in the mid 1980s when their socio-economic lives were fast deteriorating. Nigeria's foreign debt was also on the increase with faulty investment in economic development<sup>26</sup>. In the midst of the financial crises in the northern region, there were also numerous ethnic crises between southerners and northerners. Although these crises were tagged "religious crises," they were reactions to the socio-economic and political situation of the country in the 1980s.

The shift from agriculture to oil as the basis of Nigeria's economy brought in diverse trans-national corporations including Shell British Petroleum Company and Elf (later Total Oil Company). At this point in the history of Nigeria, as in other developing nations, it was theorized by international bodies<sup>27</sup> that economic participation on a global level would guarantee a solution to the poverty that was infesting the Third World, for example, IMF and World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and export-led development strategies. SAPs require countries to devalue their currencies against the United States' dollar, lift import/export restrictions, balance their budget and not overspend, and remove price control and state subsidies<sup>28</sup>. The aim of this strategy is to help stabilize a country's economic growth and aid in the development of the country. However, in the specific case of Nigeria, the majority of the people/communities did not witness economic growth and development, leading to the argument that SAPs have basically resulted in the poor of the world becoming poorer and marginalized from their means of livelihood. The conditionalities of SAPs, which included a lift of import/export restrictions, gave MNCs an economic advantage in meeting their own objectives, which is profit maximization in a global market to the detriment of the poor countries. The relationship that has evolved from this context of development is one of exploitation and unequal relations between developed and developing countries (McMichael, 2004). It is within this context that I posit that the exploitative and unequal relationship is an opportunity for developed countries such as the United States, through MNCs and international bodies such as World Bank, IMF, and World Trade Organization to further their goals in a global arena. Accordingly, the presence of Shell BP and other oil MNCs in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria since the

late 1950s can be seen as an opportunity for some countries in the First World to exploit global economic benefits to the detriment of a Third World country.

## **2.6 The Changing Political and Economic Situation in Nigeria**

Prior to the discovery of oil, Nigeria was primarily a peripheral commonwealth nation that supplied the raw materials needed in cosmopolitan Britain. As pointed out in section 2.1 of this chapter, economic development in Nigeria from 1906 to 1970 was limited to the colonizers' interest in transporting and exporting needed primary goods and raw materials such as tin, peanuts, cotton, cocoa, and rubber. The socio-political institutions in Nigeria were not well developed by the colonial administrators and, in most cases, were ignored by Lugard and his successors. Subsequently, after independence in 1960, the local citizens, based on ethnicity<sup>29</sup>, developed the socio-political institutions. However, the most dramatic event that has had a long-term effect on Nigeria's economic development is the discovery and exploitation of petroleum deposits.<sup>30</sup>

The search for crude oil in Nigeria began in 1908, but the first discovered commercial quantity was in 1956 at Olobiri in the Niger Delta region. The export of Nigerian oil was initiated at the facilities constructed at Port Harcourt in 1958. Although oil income was still marginal at the time, the prospects for its continued economic expansion appeared bright. Consequently, this accentuated political rivalry on the eve of Nigerian's independence.<sup>31</sup> By the late 1960s, oil had replaced cocoa, peanuts, cotton, rubber, and palm products as the country's largest foreign exchange earner. The oil boom of the 1970s promised to transform the Niger Delta region and Nigeria as a whole



to a modern society with economic and socio-political prosperity. However, this did not happen as the new oil industry brought no benefit, but only hardships particularly to the Niger Delta region as no new jobs were created and profit was siphoned by the ruling class and oil MNCs to foreign accounts, without any returns to the host communities (Saro-Wiwa, 1992:80-81). Rural community projects existed only in name.<sup>32</sup> According to Apter (1998: 127), what oil companies brought to the Niger Delta was not profit but pollution contaminating the mangrove swamps and farmlands with seepage and spills, while fouling the air with black smoke and lethal gases from flare offs that burned day and night.<sup>33</sup>

Revenue from oil was diverted to ethnic majorities through government contracts and provision of infrastructures at the expense of the most basic amenities and utilities in the Niger Delta area. According to Saro-Wiwa (1992: 82), “oil capitalism has destroyed the Niger Delta regions’ state of ‘nature’ by devastating the environment and draining, through its oil pipes the very lifeblood of the people.” Corroborating this view, Apter (1998:129) observed that most of this area lacked adequate funds for water, roads, health care facilities and primary education, but these facilities and amenities were built and provided in the arid north and populous west.

The sense of insecurity and marginalization became intensified in the early 1980s with the collapse of the international oil market, as the Nigerian government’s spending was no longer commensurate with the accumulation of capital. Nigeria’s federal budget deficit grew from N<sup>1</sup> 1.951 billion (US\$16.26 million) in 1980 to N6.1 billion (US\$50.8

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<sup>1</sup> N=Naira (Nigerian currency- 1N is equivalent to about US\$ 0.0078)

million) in 1982. The federal and state governments began to accumulate large foreign debts that grew from N1.988 billion (US\$ 16.57 million) in 1978 to N12.800 billion (US\$106.67 million) in 1981. By 1983, Nigeria's external debt rose to N17.758 billion (US\$ 147.98 million), by which time Nigeria was spending N140 million (US\$ 1.17 million) per month on servicing external debt, resulting in a foreign exchange crisis (NEC, 1984: cited in Elabor-Idemudia, 1999). According to Elabor-Idemudia (1999: 1) "Nigeria became one of the poorest countries in the world with a per capita gross national product of only US\$260 a year."

The federal government under Shehu Shagari (1979-1983) (the president of Nigeria's first republic) enacted an Economic Stabilization Act and declared a state of austerity in the country in 1982. Hit by worsening terms of trade and pressed for more funds, the government entered into negotiation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a standby loan. The government of Shagari could not agree with IMF conditions, which included devaluing the Naira, cutting public expenditure, ordering layoffs, freezing wages, imposing numerous taxes on workers and peasants, commercializing education and health care facilities, increasing export crops production, removing trade barriers, removing of subsidies on fertilizers, deregulating prices of petroleum products, and creating a congenial atmosphere for foreign investment by foreign private capital.

The military government of Major General Buhari<sup>34</sup> (Nigerian Military Head of State 1983- 1985) was also reluctant to succumb to the whole IMF package; however, when Major-General Ibrahim Babangida<sup>35</sup> (the Military President of Nigeria 1985-1993) ascended to power after overthrowing Buhari in a military coup in 1985, he vigorously

pursued policies along lines approved by the IMF. The whole package known as the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) constituted a precondition for securing finances from the IMF and the World Bank in 1986. Although public opinion was against an IMF loan, Babangida's government was already committed to many of the conditions of the IMF loan including more austere measures. However, pressures to reduce petroleum subsidies to consumers, to allow trade liberalization, and to devalue the Naira<sup>36</sup> came in when Babangida declared a National Economic Emergency on October 1, 1986. With this declaration, the government officially encouraged foreign investment, promoted privatization and cut back on petroleum subsidies. Despite these drastic measures, efforts to reschedule the foreign debt without an IMF loan failed, and the drop in world oil prices further compounded Nigeria's difficult economic situation. In 1988, the debt was finally rescheduled and, the Nigerian Naira (currency), which had been heavily devalued in 1986, became even more drastically reduced in 1989 and early 1990<sup>37</sup>. Consequently, there was a drop in income particularly for urban dwellers and unemployment rose to about 12 percent in 1986, and by 1988, per capita income fell below US\$ 300<sup>38</sup>.

## **2.7 Effects of the Political and Economic Situation in Nigeria**

The imposition of colonial rule in Nigeria, which resulted in the amalgamation of over 250 ethnic groups as one nation and used three (two at the beginning) separate administrative regions to govern by using the system of indirect rule, could be seen as one of the major historical causes of ethnic conflict in the country (Metz, 1991). Consequently, Nigeria's resources and economy have become hinged on the political tension created by the unequal distribution of resources between the geopolitical regions.

The competition for scarce resources often resulted in the eruption of conflict between and among the diverse ethnic groups and social classes.

Structural adjustment, which exacerbated the existing ethnic tension and conflict in Nigeria, was accompanied by falling real wages, the redistribution of income from urban to rural areas, and reduced health, education, and social spending. The decrease in spending on social programs contributed to often-vociferous domestic unrest, such as the Muslim-Christian riots in most northern states throughout the 1980s and up until the 1990s. Rioting in urban areas, such as Lagos in 1988 and the recent ones in some parts of the Niger Delta happened in response to reduced gasoline subsidies to consumers and increases in the price of petroleum products. Also, student-led violence occurred in opposition to government economic policies in May and June 1989<sup>39</sup>, while the second coup attempt against General Babangida took place in April 1990 led by Major Gideon Orkar and his group<sup>40</sup>.

In the late 1980s, inflation and wage controls had drastically eroded the incomes of the salaried elites, and, in most cases, they had to moonlight in the private sector through farming, trade, consultancy, or business. It was not unusual to find a professor's campus garage used as a warehouse for the trucks and equipment in his construction business, and behind the house, chicken pens, with which his wife conducted a poultry business. Others sought to emigrate, especially highly skilled people, such as doctors, lawyers, and professors, who realized they could do much better abroad. The sudden decline in the income of the elites resulted from Nigeria's belt-tightening policies intensified by the IMF conditions and perpetuated by SAPs. Business people, especially those in trade, were less affected by inflation, but the recessionary effects of the SAP had cut into their

incomes as well, by lowering demand or by controlling imports and exports more tightly. By the late 1980s, however, many of the elite and even the middle classes were being obliged to adjust to a lower standard of living,<sup>41</sup> consequently eroding the Nigerian middle class.

Another effect of the political and economic situation in Nigeria is that, after the 1967-70 civil war, petroleum output and prices increased rapidly. The government's control of the extraction, refining, and distribution of oil through partnership with oil multinational corporations meant that the state became the dominant source of capital. This partnership between the government and oil MNCs gave government bureaucrats access to high incomes. Consequently, to the most vigorous, resourceful, and well-connected venture capitalists (often politicians, bureaucrats, army officers, and their clients), productive economic activity lost its appeal. Instead, manipulating government spending became the means to fortune.

The political and economic situation in Nigeria also affected the nation in terms of ethnicity, class and gender, as shown in sub-sections 2.7.1 to 2.7.3 below. The relationship between the state sector and oil wealth meant further marginalization of women in both the political and economic arena, thereby exacerbating gender inequality. Women who were largely employed in the agricultural sector found themselves without jobs and farmlands for subsistence; moreover, their social and political roles further eroded since these roles were not in the least beneficial to global capital. Economic globalization is basically about profit maximization with minimal economic inputs; therefore, women's household economy and their domestic activities do not add direct profits in economic terms. Furthermore, access to the oil wealth, which was and still is

inevitably the state wealth in Nigeria, as a result of the 1979 Petroleum Act<sup>42</sup> (originally Decree No. 51 of 1969), was sought by the ethnic group that controlled the political machinery, thereby escalating ethnic rivalry.

The political and economic situation in Nigeria has also resulted in class struggle, which has reinforced the power and enriched the lives of some and has threatened the livelihood and impoverished the lives of many others, particularly those that have been marginalized and alienated from their lands as a result of oil exploration activities due to their dependence on land-based resources.

### **2.7.1 Ethnicity**

Ethnicity is one of the key factors in understanding Nigeria's pluralistic society, and ethnic identity is still a vital part of national life, even in the twenty-first century.

Ethnicity is one of the central factors that determine how people relate to one another and how they benefit from each other. When people get economic or political favours in Nigeria today, ethnicity is often the basis for such favours. In other words, nepotism is rampant with people getting appointed to positions or acquiring some political power because they come from powerful ethnic groups. Also, people are denied positions or opportunities because they come from powerless ethnic groups. Given this situation and coupled with "institutional inefficiency and decay, and dependence on oil wealth to finance development projects in an uncertain world economy" (Falola and Ihonvbere 1988: 11), class and ethnic struggles have emerged among the various interest groups over who should control the wealth of the nation. It is therefore not surprising that the economic and political situation in Nigeria has led to several ethnic groups resorting to

violence, exploitation and intimidation as ways of getting what they want. Examples of ethnic and class struggles for access to the resources of the land include: the Makurdi riots of 1948<sup>43</sup>; the tension which mounted in Lagos between the Igbos and Yorubas in 1948<sup>44</sup>; the secessionist move by the then Western region and the defunct Biafra in Nigeria that resulted in the Nigerian civil war in the 1960s<sup>45</sup>; the “alleged” religious riots of the 1980s in Northern Nigeria<sup>46</sup>; the bloody clashes between the Tivs and their neighbours<sup>47</sup>; the proposed contracting out of some states in Nigeria by the “Orkar” led coup of April 1990<sup>48</sup>; and the bloody clashes between the Ogonis and their neighbours between 1993 and 1995<sup>49</sup>. Most recently, such ethnic and class tensions/struggles have emanated mainly from the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, an area in which the MNCs are in control due mainly to the inequitable distribution of Nigeria’s multibillion-dollar oil revenue among its population. This tension and crisis situation in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta region, has come to be known as “resource control” struggle. These bloody clashes have been between Ijaws and Itsekiris, Ijaws and Urhobos, Ijaws and Isoko, Urhobos and Itsekiris, Okrika and Ikwerre, and Ogoni and Andoni.

Loyalties are now being drawn into ethnically, linguistically and geographically smaller groupings since Nigerians are no longer loyal to the nation-state (because the state cannot produce the things demanded of it, among others). It is worthy to note here that, historically, the British administration, particularly in West Africa, arbitrarily divided ethnic groups/kingdoms into different states/nations. On the other hand, diverse ethnic groups were amalgamated within a single political system. Since “in a globalized economy, the market forces are not capable of responding to the needs and welfare of individuals at the national level and nation-state” (Elabor-Idemudia, 1996: 2),

individuals from these amalgamated political entities are now looking up to and paying loyalty to their original diverse ethnic groups instead of the nation state. However, in order to survive the emergent consequences of the relationships in the capitalist economy, those who are impoverished now resort to riots, rebellion and guerrilla wars in order to draw attention to their plight and to fight the forces of globalization.

One can conclude that ethnic tension in Nigeria is a political and historical constant and has a direct link to the changing political and economic systems in the country. Throughout four decades of political independence, Nigeria has remained severely underdeveloped, and the majority of the people have not witnessed any significant improvement in their living conditions. The poor living conditions have unleashed forces of political instability, unrest, alienation and class conflicts (Falola and Ihonvbere 1988: 11). The processes of globalization has so far not only heightened unrest and instability, but also has intensified ethnic struggle for the nation's oil wealth. The adherence of the Nigerian government to the IMF conditions mentioned earlier, institutional inefficiency/decay, and the poor living conditions of the majority of the masses have also contributed to the heightened struggle among the various ethnic groups as to which group should control the wealth of the nation. In view of this fact, Ekpenyong (1992) noted that migration and urbanization in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, have been accompanied by the maintenance of strong rural-urban links and a reinforced ethnic consciousness. The feeling of in-group affiliation has also introduced ethnic tension and conflicts in the urban areas. Since most urban centres in Nigeria are ethnically heterogeneous, ethnic groups are in close contact with one another. Often, they oppose one another as they focus on the differences that separate them and the



quest to have a major share of the “national cake.” Mercier (1965) observed that it is also in the city that one sees best how opposition and competition between ethnic groups sometimes facilitate and, at other times, express tension and obstacles to the formation of new social structures such as professional associations and philanthropic or voluntary organizations.

The history of Nigeria as a nation has provided “pressures and circumstances”<sup>50</sup> that have tended to make people cling to what they know and have come to depend on<sup>51</sup>. In other words, they adhere to regional loyalties, ethnicity, kin, and patron-client relations that would protect them in an unstable and insecure socio-political and economic environment.

### **2.7.2 Class**

Globalization as manifested through the activities of the MNCs in Nigeria, has reorganized the power structure of the society. It has reinforced the power and enriched the lives of some, and has threatened the livelihood and impoverished the lives of many others (Elabor-Idemudia, 1997: 6). This process has divided the structure of the society into the “haves” and the “have-nots.” In the colonial era, class division was particularly based on the “colonizers” and the “colonized.” Class division in Nigeria, based on the current mode of production has developed new stratification systems, whereby the “haves” are made up of the Nigerian bourgeoisie, and multinational corporations (MNCs). The MNCs take advantage of the political and economic instability in Nigeria, and carry out their activities under little or no environmental supervision, to the detriment of the host communities. On the other hand, the poor masses, the majority of

whom are women and some men, including the working poor, constitute the “have-nots.” This class of people has been alienated from their land and do not own or control any resources and/or means of production except their labour, which in most cases is underpaid or under utilized.

The Nigerian bourgeoisie (to this class belong the retired military and civil officers, the chiefs, shareholders and managers of trans-national corporation subsidiaries in Nigeria) controls the resources of the state, and uses state power to acquire land, credit and agricultural inputs. Initially, most of the land the elites appropriated was used for speculative purposes. Later, however, they became absentee farmers whose landholdings were in the hundred of hectares. On the opposite end of this class, are the traditional farmers who own small pieces of land or rent from the government under the land use decree. Due to the small size of their holdings, they are often compelled to work as part-time workers to augment their farm incomes. This class constitutes about 70 percent of the rural population and has become highly militant due to the alienation from their lands; they now demand the right to a decent life. In addition to the alienation of the people from the land, the lands in the Niger Delta region have been devastated as a result of the activities of oil MNCs and other TNCs, which include ecological degradation, oil spills that pollute the fishing creeks and the impact these have on people’s health and economic standard of living.

The oil industry that has become Nigeria’s economic base is also central to the ongoing civil unrest in the country. The administration of the oil industry has caused civil strife due to the inequitable sharing of the country’s multibillion-dollar annual oil revenues amongst its population, the majority of whom are poor (Panos 1999). In other

words, oil exploration in Nigeria, which is based on the capitalist mode of production, has enriched only a small minority, while the vast majority has become increasingly impoverished, particularly those in the Niger Delta. One of the consequences of this stratified mode of ownership is the polarization of the Nigerian society into two major social classes- the “haves” and “have-nots.” The Nigerian bourgeoisie and expatriates in the oil sector have access to and/or own the means of production while the working poor and other poor masses are alienated from the means of production and only have their labour to sell in exchange for wages. This situation also accounts for the eradication of the middle class in present day Nigerian society. One is either at the top or at the bottom of the class hierarchy since the majority of government workers who had made up the bulk of the middle class have now moved either to the top with the “petronaira”<sup>52</sup> or to the bottom with less or nothing to take care of basic needs.

### **2.7.3 Gender**

Women in all classes have experienced globalization in a number of different ways in different countries. For women in the upper class, economic mobility has taken an upward path while women in the lower class are experiencing a downward spiral due to the negative consequences of globalization on their environment, and the environment is, in many cases in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, the main source of livelihood.

Men and women in different parts of the country have also been differentially impacted by globalization. In some situations, men go out to work in the factories or oilrigs/oil locations while women stay at home and provide care for the young and elderly. In some other situations, both men and women work outside their homes; while

the men and some women work in factories, other women work as prostitutes, servicing the expatriates and their rich indigenous contemporaries. In the specific case of Obelle and Obagi communities, findings from the in-depth interviews reveal that women confront violence while men are made redundant in their role as providers for their families.

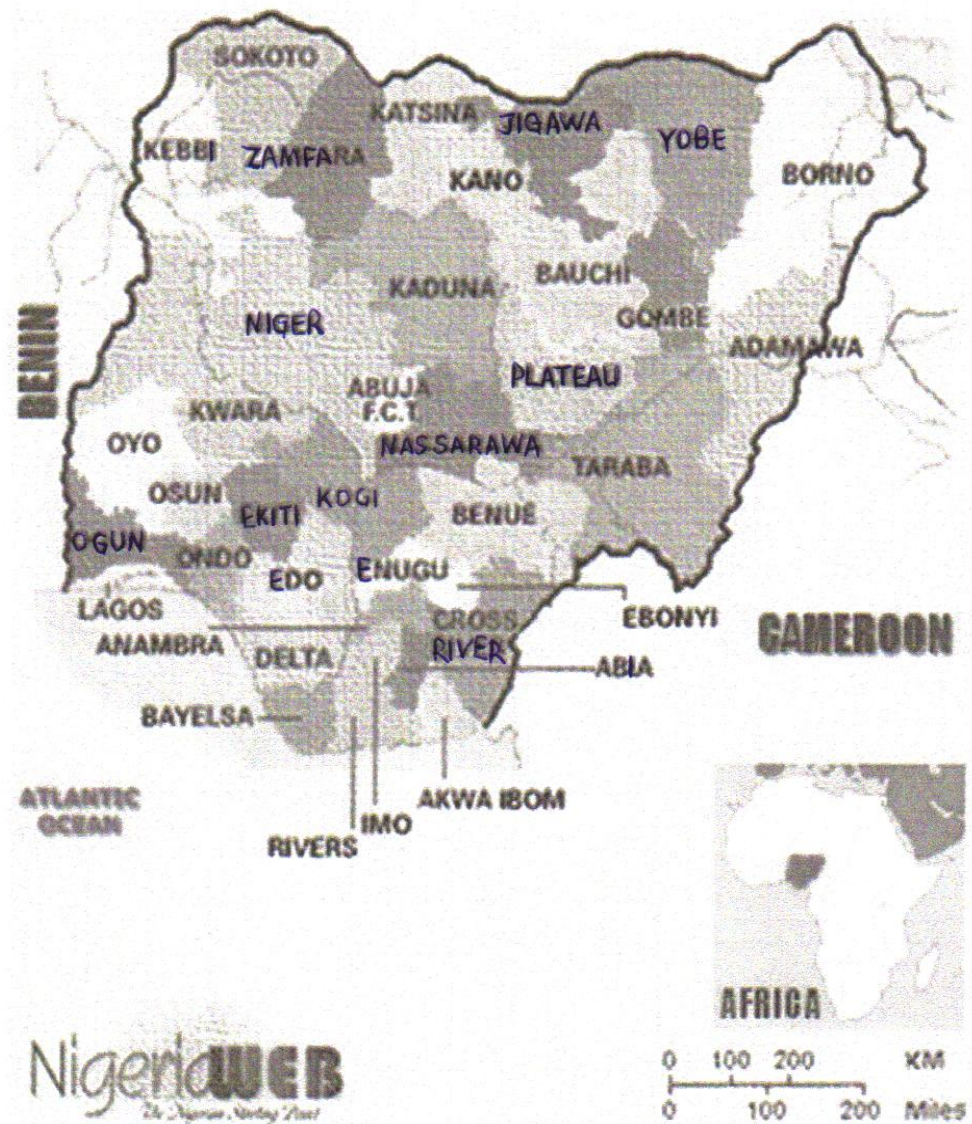
Globalization has intensified some of the existing inequalities and insecurities for poor women. In the case of the women of the Niger Delta region, the specific impact of globalization for women constitutes a focus of my study in view of the fact that the oil rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria has become the arena of a tense triangular conflict between many ethnic communities, the oil producing MNCs and the Nigerian government (Panos 1999: 16). There is a common-sense belief in contemporary Nigeria that the violence in this region (both in intra- and inter-ethnic conflicts) is sponsored by the state and the transnational oil companies to keep the communities divided, weak and distracted from the causes of their problems which include ecological degradation, poor health and a low socioeconomic standard of living.

In the Niger Delta region, as in other areas in Nigeria, women traditionally had economically important positions in interregional trade and the markets, worked on farms as major labour sources, and had influential positions in traditional systems of local organization. Women in the south, especially among the Yoruba peoples, had received Western-style education since the nineteenth century, so they occupied positions in the professions and to some extent in politics. In addition, there are women headed households, which are more numerous in the south, but are on the rise everywhere within the country.

Women in the Niger Delta region are caught in the midst of the ongoing civil unrest between the government/multinational oil companies and the poor masses. Women have lost access to land as their farmlands are often confiscated by the local chiefs wishing to sell them to urban based speculators, commercial farmers and the multinational corporations (Metz, 1991, and Manby, 1999). Yet these women are expected to contribute unpaid labour to the household agricultural production. They spend long hours on domestic labour and subsistence food production with little or no help from spouses, sons, or brothers who have gone in search of wage labour in the cities. The activities of the multinational oil companies have further exacerbated the problem through the destruction of the ecosystem. Drinking water has been contaminated and people are exposed to all kinds of chemicals and oil spillage as well as pipe blowouts that are hazardous to their health. Local women often lack access to primary healthcare and have lost their source of economic independence due to land alienation.

Though the literature has addressed the issue of the erosion of women's economic importance in the Niger Delta region as a result of colonialism, oil exploration and exploitation by the MNCs, Obelle and Obagi women in Rivers State have never been studied specifically. This research is, therefore, aimed at examining and analyzing this issue using a narrative framework (whereby the subjects give narratives or stories of their everyday life experiences) based on feminist ethnography. The women's narratives are based on their experiences of the impact of global capital through the activities of Shell Petroleum Company in Obelle and Total Oil Nigeria Limited in Obagi on gender

relations and class struggle/ethnic tension, and how these in turn impact on their household economy.



**Map of Nigeria showing all the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja**

Source: [http://nigeriaworld.com/images/maps/map\\_states3.jpg](http://nigeriaworld.com/images/maps/map_states3.jpg).

**Table 1: Nigerian Leaders and Types of Government (1960 – Date)**

Leaders	Administration/Government	Date of Leadership	Designation
Dr. N.Azikiwe	Civilian	1 Oct 1960 – 1 Oct 1963	Governor General
---dito---	Civilian	1 Oct 1963-16 Jan 1966	President of the Republic
Alhaji A. Tafawa Balewa	Civilian	30 Aug 1960 - 15 Jan 1966	Prime Minister
Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi	Military	16 Jan 1966 - 29 Jul 1966	Head of the Military Government
Yakubu Gowon	Military	1 Aug 1966 - 29 Jul 1975	Head of the Military Government
Murtala Ramat Mohammed	Military	29 Jul 1975 - 13 Feb 1976	Head of the Military Government
Olusegun Obasanjo	Military	14 Feb 1976 - 1 Oct 1979	Head of the Military Government
Shehu Shagari	Civilian	1 Oct 1979 - 31 Dec 1983	President of the Republic
Muhammadu Buhari	Military	31 Dec 1983 - 27 Aug 1985	Head of the Federal Military Government
Ibrahim Babangida	Military	27 Aug 1985 - 4 Jan 1993	Chairman of the Armed Forces Ruling Council
----dito---	Military	4 Jan 1993 - 26 Aug 1993	Chairman of the National Defence and Security Council
Ernest Shonekan	Civilian	26 Aug 1993 - 17 Nov 1993	Head of the Interim National Government
Sani Abacha	Military	17 Nov 1993 - 8 Jun 1998	Chairman of the Provisional Ruling Council
Abdulsalam Abubakar	Military	9 Jun 1998 - 29 May 1999	Chairman of the Provisional Ruling Council
Olusegun Obasanjo	Civilian	29 May 1999 -	President of the Republic



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- <sup>1</sup> The oil boom in the early 1970s, a decade after independence, brought a lot of revenue to Nigeria but it stayed mostly in government
- <sup>2</sup> Patience Elabor-Idemudia, *A Study of Factors Affecting Extension in Nigeria with Particular Emphasis on Rubber Farming in Bendel State*. (1984). Dr. Elabor-Idemudia Master's thesis was written when Nigeria had 19 States which have increased to 36 over the years and Bendel State is now split into Delta and Edo States. Also referenced; <http://www.onlinenigeria.com/geography.asp>
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid
- <sup>5</sup> Frederick Lugard was a high commissioner (1900 to 1906) of the British protectorates in Nigeria, which later became Nigeria with him as its first governor general (1912 to 1918).
- <sup>6</sup> The Northern and Southern protectorates were unified in the 1914 amalgamation by Lugard who became the governor general of the new Nigerian nation
- <sup>7</sup> <http://www.onlinenigeria.com/geography.asp>
- <sup>8</sup> The policy of indirect rule is the governing of the protectorates through the traditional or appointed rulers from among people who had been defeated by the British army. Under the indirect rule, the official traditional rulers were transformed into salaried district heads and in effect, agents of the British authority, responsible for peacekeeping and tax collection. (See: Metz (1991), Library of Congress/federal Research Division/Country Studies/Area Handbook Series).
- <sup>9</sup> The Aro state, prior to colonialism and the immediate years following colonial administration in Nigeria, was a highly organized, egalitarian, and prosperous community of people, backed by highly organized hierarchy of priests, chiefs, and agents to the "all powerful God" known as "Chukwu" or "Ibini-Ukpabi." With the power and prestige of the Ibini-Ukpabi behind them, the Aros fanned out from their homeland in the heart of Igbo land by a system of outposts and roads from the Atlantic Ocean to the banks of the River Benue and from the Cross River/Cameroon mountains to the River Niger, conquering and dominating all the groups around the south eastern region. Traditionally, the Aros emphasized individual enterprise (without losing the sense of community), which was sometimes used as an explanation for their "success" and mobility. The Aros had a propensity to form a tight social network and organized for each other. Their bond to each other was strong although they did not have a single ruler, as was the case in Yoruba-land and in Northern Nigeria. The Aros had an organized "Amala." The Amala was a council of elders, who governed through democratic means and gave everyone a voice in the governance of their land. Aro hegemony therefore, was based on the power and influence of Ibini-Ukpabi, backed by the Amala and communities such as Abam, Ohafia, Abiriba, Ekoi, as well as other warrior communities in the south east of Nigeria.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid
- <sup>11</sup> British economic policy in colonial Nigeria was to make the country the source/base for the supply of raw materials, as well as a source of funds for the colonial government through the payment of tax.
- <sup>12</sup> These western educated African elites were agitating for participation in regional governmental processes, which the colonial government officials did not favour. It was feared that, as wealth and education increased, participation in the governmental processes by the African elites would result in political discontent and sedition.
- <sup>13</sup> Tafawa Balewa, also known as Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (1912-1966) was the first prime minister of independent Nigeria, serving from 1957 to 1966. Balewa entered the government in 1952 as Minister of Works, and later served as Minister of Transport. In 1957, he was elected Chief Minister, forming a coalition government between the Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons, led by Nnamdi Azikiwe. He retained the post as prime minister, when Nigeria gained independence in 1960, and was reelected in 1964. His term in office was turbulent, with regional factionalism constantly threatening his government. He was overthrown and killed in a military coup on January 15, 1966, as were many other leaders, including his old companion Ahmadu Bello. His body was discovered by a roadside near Lagos six days after he was ousted from office. Balewa was buried in Bauchi.
- <sup>14</sup> Samuel Ladoke Akintola (1910-1966) was a Nigerian politician. He served as premier of Western Region, Nigeria from December 15, 1959 to May 1962 and again from January 1963 until his death. Akintola, who was a chief and a member of the Yoruba ethnic group, was one of the most important Nigerian politicians during the time when Nigeria was gaining independence and for a few years

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afterward. He was killed in Ibadan the capital of Western Region, during the bloody January 1966 coup, along with many other politicians.

<sup>15</sup> Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello (1909-1966) was a Nigerian politician, who became the first premier of Northern Nigeria. In the 1959 independence elections, Sir Ahmadu Bello led the Northern People's Congress (NPC) to win a plurality of the parliamentary seats. Sir Ahmadu Bello's NPC forged an alliance with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe's National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) to form Nigeria's first indigenous federal government which led to independence from Britain. In forming the 1960 independence federal government of the Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello as president of the NPC, chose to remain Premier of Northern Nigeria and devolved the position of Prime Minister of the Federation to the deputy president of the NPC, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. He was assassinated in the 15th January 1966 military coup, which toppled Nigeria's post-independence government. He was still serving as premier of Northern Nigeria at the time. His portrait adorns Nigeria's two hundred naira currency note.

<sup>16</sup> Dr. Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe, usually referred to as Nnamdi Azikwe, (1904-1996) was Nigeria's first President. After Nigeria's independence in 1960 he gained the office of Governor General, and with the proclamation of a republic in 1963 he became the first and only ceremonial President of Nigeria, while Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was the Prime Minister. He and his civilian colleagues were removed from power in the military coup of January 15, 1966. During the Biafran (1967-1970) war of secession, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe became a spokesman for the nascent republic and an adviser to its leader Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. After the war, he served as Chancellor of Lagos University from 1972 to 1976. He founded the Nigerian People's Party in 1979 and made an unsuccessful bid for the presidency that year and again in 1983. He left politics in 1986. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe died in 1996 at the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Enugu. His portrait adorns Nigeria's five hundred naira currency note.

<sup>17</sup> Major General Johnson Aguiyi Ironsi was the Nigerian army's commander in chief that intervened through a coup in January 1966 to restore order in Nigeria following civil unrest as a result of claims of fraud and irregularities in government after the first National elections. Note also that Ironsi was from the eastern region and was in the leadership position from January 1966 to July 1966.

<sup>18</sup> The Aburi convention was held at the invitation of the Ghanaian military government, which tried to resolve the crisis that was festering in Nigeria. Present at the convention were Nigerian military leaders and senior police officers.

<sup>19</sup> Gowon was a thirty one year old Lieutenant Colonel when he was appointed as a "compromise" candidate to head the Federal Military Government (FMG). He later became a Major General in the Nigerian army and was in this position from July 1966 to July 1975.

<sup>20</sup> Murtala Muhammad was a thirty eight year old Brigadier who was appointed to succeed Gowon after the bloodless coup that saw to his demise as the head of the FMG. Muhammad later became a General in the army and was in the position of leadership from July 1975 to February 1976 when he was assassinated in an unsuccessful coup d'état.

<sup>21</sup> Although Amadiume was writing about Nnobi community in eastern Nigeria, this region and the Niger Delta region, where I come from, share some similarities in culture and are in close proximity to each other geographically. Consequently, I am using her study to draw parallels to Obelle and Obagi communities, where women dominate the subsistence economy and care for their households.

<sup>22</sup> Widow inheritance in Nigerian culture is the act of a brother or other male member of the family inheriting a late brother's wife. Widow inheritance is linked to wifehood and comes with benefits such as access to late husband's family farmland, membership and access to all rights as every member of the extended family. It also means that the woman will be provided for and protected by her late husband's family members, just as her husband would have done for her if he were alive. See Emery, V (2006). "Women's Inheritance Rights in Nigeria: Transformative Practices" In *Widows Rights International*. <http://www.widowsrights.org/researchnews>

<sup>23</sup> The Aba Women's Riots of October 1929 arose out of: dissatisfaction with the low prices being offered for local produce such as palm kernels and edible oil, while imported goods were kept at artificially high prices, a fear that the British administration would tax women separately from men, and hatred of the Warrant Chiefs and the Native Courts because of the corruption and unfair sentences imposed.

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- <sup>24</sup> Obasanjo was Muhammad's deputy and succeeded him after his assassination. He was from the western region and had commanded a federal division during the civil war. He kept the chain of command that was established by Murtala Muhammad and was in this position up to 1979 when the military handed power to an elected civilian president. Currently, he is the Nigerian president having won a re-election in 2003.
- <sup>25</sup> Shehu Shagari was the President of the second republic of Nigeria from October 1, 1979 to December 1983 when the military seized power once again claiming that there was no confidence in the civilian government.
- <sup>26</sup> The fall in oil prices in the mid 1980s put a financial strain on Nigeria's Second Republic, which for political reasons, continued spending and investing in economic development that was questionable, exemplified by the Ajaokuta, Aladje, Jos, Oshogbo, and Katsina Steel-rolling mills. Nigeria's foreign debt increased from 3.3 billion Naira in 1978 to 14.7 billion in 1982. (Also see Library of Congress/federal Research Division/Country Studies/Area Handbook Series).
- <sup>27</sup> International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB). The IMF was established along with the WB as a specialized agency affiliated with the United Nations, responsible for stabilizing international exchange rates and payments. The IMF is also responsible for the provision of loans to its members, including industrialized and developing countries when they experience balance of payments difficulties. The WB's primary purpose is to provide loans to developing countries for productive projects.
- <sup>28</sup> Structural Adjustment Programmes (Policies) (SAPs) have basically resulted in the poor of the world becoming poorer and marginalized from their means of livelihood. Devaluation of local currencies makes local goods cheaper for foreigners to buy and theoretically makes foreign imports more expensive. Balancing national budgets can be done by raising taxes or by cutting government spending resulting in deep cuts in programmes like education, health and social care. Also, the removal of subsidies is designed to control the price of basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. By devaluing the currency and simultaneously removing price controls, the immediate effect of SAPs is generally to hike prices up, increasing poverty to such an extent that riots are a frequent result. Adhering to the principles of SAPs and IMF conditionalities, the local environment and means of livelihood of the host communities/countries have been negatively impacted by the activities of multinational/transnational corporations (MNCs/TNCs). These communities have also witnessed its share of violence and riots in the hope of bringing about a change in the status quo. Consequently, SAPs hurt the poor most, because they depend heavily on the services and subsidies that are no longer available as a result of SAPs and IMF conditionalities. One could argue that the IMF and the World Bank through policies like SAPs have in effect, demanded that poor nations lower the standard of living of their people in favour of debt repayments to the World Bank and IMF.
- <sup>29</sup> Ethnicity is central to the understanding of Nigerian society, given the imposition of colonial rule, the amalgamation of diverse ethnic groups, interethnic and regional competition/violence and many other factors that led to the recession and lowered standard of living. In the face of these factors, people in Nigeria would cling to what they know would give them protection in an unstable and insecure environment.
- <sup>30</sup> See Metz (1991), Library of Congress/federal Research Division/Country Studies/Area Handbook Series (1991)
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid
- <sup>32</sup> Picture Eleven shows a sign board, which is the closest thing to a hospital that Obagi community has.
- <sup>33</sup> Pictures Nine and Ten show gas flaring in the day and night time respectively.
- <sup>34</sup> Major General Muhammadu Buhari was the leader of the December 31 1983 military coup d'état that overthrew Shehu Shagari's civilian government.
- <sup>35</sup> Major General Ibrahim Babangida was a member of the Supreme Military council under Murtala Muhammad, Olusegun Obasanjo, and Muhammadu Buhar regimes. He had been involved in the 1975 and 1983/84 coups.
- <sup>36</sup> The Naira is Nigeria's basic currency unit. It is subdivided into 100 kobo (k). The naira was introduced on January 1, 1973, replacing the Nigerian pound (q. v.) at the rate of two naira for one pound. At that time N 1 equaled US \$ 1.52. The naira subsequently lost its value against the dollar; average exchange

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rate in 1990 was NGN 8.04 per USD 1.00. Currently, the exchange rate is 1.00 USD per 132.850 NGN (See <http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert.cgi> (2004).

<sup>37</sup> Metz (1991), Library of Congress/federal Research Division/Country Studies/Area Handbook Series (1991)

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> Major Orkar and his group carried out this coup as a well conceived, planned and executed revolution for the marginalized, oppressed and enslaved peoples of the Middle Belt and the south with a view to freeing the poor masses in these regions and children yet unborn from eternal slavery and colonization by a clique of this country. According to Orkar, Nigeria's history is replete with numerous and uncontrollable instances of callous and insensitive, domatory and repressive intrigues by those who think it is their birthright to oppress until eternity the political and economic privileges of this great country to the exclusion of the people of the Middle Belt and the south. In his speech on the day of the failed coup attempt, Orkar stated that the clique has almost succeeded in subjugating the Middle Belt and making them voiceless and now are extending same to the southern region, which includes the Niger Delta region. Consequently, he observed that it was his belief that this quest for domination, oppression and marginalisation is against the wish of God, and therefore, must be resisted with vehemence. It has been argued that the rebellion that culminated in this coup attempt should be categorized as a "resource control uprising" since military officers involved were mostly from the south and were driven by deeply held feelings that although their exploited lands produced Nigeria's oil wealth their people had little or nothing to show for it. See: [www.dawodu.com](http://www.dawodu.com)

<sup>41</sup> Metz (1991), Library of Congress/federal Research Division/Country Studies/Area Handbook Series (1991)

<sup>42</sup> The Petroleum Act provides that the entire ownership and control of all mineral oils and natural gas in Nigeria, under land/water is vested in the federal government.

<sup>43</sup> The early period of British occupation of Tiv land in Nigeria up to the late nineteen forties, witnessed a number of protest movements such as: 1912 (yov), 1929 (Haakaa), Ivase (Undated), 1939 (Nyamboa), 1945 (Kumendur) and 1948 (Hoyoj). All of these protests (particularly the Hoyoj of 1948) were movements that were directed against the British and their agents like clan or kindred heads, tax collectors, judges, policemen, scribes, and messengers and particularly where there have been abuses of power by these agents. See: Andrew Ahiane, Nov 16, 2004. *Tiv, Jukun: A Catalogue of Crises*. [www.thisdayonline.com/archive/2001/11/05/20011105fea02.html](http://www.thisdayonline.com/archive/2001/11/05/20011105fea02.html)

<sup>44</sup> 1948 tension in Lagos: migration to other areas particularly Lagos has been a source of anti-Ibo feeling among other ethnic groups-due to land hunger. Out of necessity, the Igbos, pressing against limited land resources, had to seek other avenues of livelihood outside their geographic boundaries. They migrated to other areas, particularly Yoruba land, to work as farm labourers or as servants and unskilled workers prior to the colonial era. Part of the reasons for the 1948 tension was based on the early perception of the Igbos as originally "farm labourers or as servants and unskilled workers," but, who as time has gone by, have transcended such lowly occupations and have gone on to greater things in life in their new residences. As a consequence of the comparative lack of opportunity in their homeland, the Igbos embraced western education with great enthusiasm and determination. By the late 1930s, the Igbos were more heavily represented than any other ethnic group in higher institutions; consequently, increasing numbers of Igbos were appointed to the civil service. The influx of Igbos into towns of the west and north and their rapid educational development made them competitors for jobs and professional positions; this was the basis of the 1948 tension in Lagos between the Igbos and Yorubas, who felt that the Igbos had come into their land and were usurping their resources and taking away jobs from the local population. See: Mobolaji E. Aluko, Nov. 16, 2004. (*In Praise of Zik of Africa on his 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (Posthumously). [www.dawodu.com/aluko101.htm](http://www.dawodu.com/aluko101.htm)

<sup>45</sup> The 1967-1970 Biafra secession was caused by the economic and political instability and ethnic friction that characterized Nigerian public life in the mid 1960s. There was a growing resentment against the more prosperous, educated Igbo minority in the mostly Hausa north. This resentment on numerous occasions erupted in violence against the Igbos and in September 1966, about 10,000 Igbo people were massacred in the Northern region, while about 1,000,000 fled as refugees to the Igbo dominated east. Attempts at reconciliation failed and on May 30, 1967, Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Odumegwu

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Ojukwu, with the authorization of a consultative assembly, declared the eastern region a sovereign and independent republic under the name of Biafra. See: *Biafran Secession: Nigeria 1967-1970*.

<http://www.onwar.com/aced/chrono/c1900s.yr65/fbiafra1967.htm>

<sup>46</sup> According to Falola (1998), these crises had a multi-causal dimension - ethnicity, religious pluralism, poverty, and politics. Falola (1998) further stressed the role of religious fundamentalists in their provocative rhetoric that invariably exacerbates interethnic and interreligious tensions and the politicization of religion in the country. He also noted "religion is used by the power-hungry as a stepping stone to power and political legitimacy, with politicians urging their followers to vote along religious lines (example, Muslims are told to vote for Muslims, and Christians for Christians). Consequently, religion and politics have become sources of violence in Nigeria. See: Toyin Falola (1998) *Violence in Nigeria: The Crises of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*. Rochester, N. Y: University of Rochester Press.

<sup>47</sup> Usually, these crises are based on a struggle over the ownership of farmland.

<sup>48</sup> A group of military personnel and some members of the political class, as a rebellion against the domination, oppression and marginalization of ethnic groups from the south and middle belt region of Nigeria by the Hausa north, carried out the Orkar-led coup of April 22, 1990. See endnote 40 above.

<sup>49</sup> According to Saro-Wiwa in his statement to the Ogoni Civil Disturbances Tribunal in Port Harcourt on September 21 1995, the 1993 to 1995 "crises between the Ogonis and their neighbours should not be described as communal clashes as it was nothing of the sort." Instead, there is a common-sense belief in the Niger Delta that the Nigerian government in alliance with the oil companies, particularly Shell, sponsored the massacres of Ogonis in order to distract them from the real cause of their oppression, marginalisation and alienation from their land. See: [www.ratical.org/corporations/KSWstmt.html](http://www.ratical.org/corporations/KSWstmt.html)

<sup>50</sup> The pressures and circumstances include the imposition of colonial rule, independence, interethnic and interregional competition or even violence, military coups, a civil war, an oil boom that had government and individuals spending recklessly and often with corrupt intentions, droughts (particularly in northern Nigeria), and a debt crisis that led to a drastic recession and lowered standards of living.

<sup>51</sup> See 44 above

<sup>52</sup> Petronaira is a term coined from petroleum and Naira (Nigerian currency), to represent money acquired from economic transactions in crude oil and its products.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides both an overview of some of the literature and of the theoretical framework (relevant to the research problem), which inform both the analysis, and organization of this dissertation. Accordingly it consists of two major sections devoted to each of these in turn. The first section provides an overview of the key ideas in the literature on the following topics and themes: the historical legacies of colonialism, dependency and development; the effects of global capitalism on, gender relations in the family, traditional cultural lifestyle, and ethnic relations in the communities. The second section provides an explanation of what is best described as an intersectionality framework, which has been adopted in the analysis of this study

#### **3.2 Literature Review**

Global capitalism is portrayed in the literature as a phenomenon that is both positive/progressive and negative/detrimental. This chapter explores the contradictions of development and highlights how privatization, the nexus of modern capitalism, enables the relocation of MNCs into Third World countries under the umbrella of globalization. Local citizens, human rights groups, and some scholars have accused

MNCs in developing countries of human exploitation, environmental degradation, and operating without adequate regulations and laws to protect the rights and welfare of the local citizens and the environment (Akanle, 1991; Kabeer, 1994; Apter, 1998; Manby, 1999; Brisibe, 2001; and Duruigbo, 2006). Special emphasis is given to how development, defined by its advocates as a planned process aimed at bringing about improved rates of economic growth and quality of life to newly independent states has not achieved this objective. Instead, most of these nations/states have lagged behind in global economic growth and the local citizens have not experienced an improved quality of life as exemplified in Nigeria by the detrimental effect of oil exploration in communities of the Niger Delta region. The literature review for this study is focused therefore on post independent era, decolonization and development programmes, theories and approaches.

### **3.2.1 Decolonization and the Development Project**

The western notion of development (or mal-development as we now know it to be) was first introduced into the African continent during the era of colonialism. Colonialism occurred in most African countries, including Nigeria, as mercantile capitalism. Africa, generally viewed as the “dark continent,” needed to be explored as a source of resources and market to meet the expansionist aim of Europeans. Expeditions were organized and several African countries were subsequently “discovered” and occupied by colonialists from Britain, France, Belgium, and Spain, with millions taken back to Europe and North America as slaves. In the specific case of Nigeria as in most colonial territories, “British colonial administrators reorganized existing cultures by imposing new inequalities to facilitate their exploitation” (McMichael, 2004: 3). The

“colonial administration used local landlords and chiefs to rule parts of the colonies. They confiscated personal and common land for cash cropping, deprived women of their customary resources, and elevated ethno-racial differences by privileging certain ethnic groups in the exercise of colonial rule (McMichael, 2004: 3). Consequently, development became a function for the legitimacy of colonialism, serving as an extension of modern social engineering to the colonies as they were incorporated into the European orbit (McMichael, 2004: 3).

It was generally assumed that, for any nation in the “backward” Third World to develop, it must first become modernized. Consequently, the “development project” was introduced in the 1940s when most colonized nations started to agitate for change. Walt Whitman Rostow (1960) and others looked at how progress had occurred in Europe and theorized that these new nations would have to follow these stages in order for them to develop. Since England was the first country to industrialize, Walt Whitman Rostow and others thought that if the conditions of English industrialization could be understood, the experience might be duplicated elsewhere (Mason, 1997). England thus became the standard model for global industrialization, and based on assumptions about England’s development, Rostow published a book titled, *The Stages of Economic Growth* in 1960, which provided the principles for developing the Third World.

The idea of a Third World, where at least 70 percent of the world’s population now lives, was conceived during the dusk of colonialism (Mason, 1997: 39). This general group of nations, named in 1952 as the “Third World” countries, includes almost all of the peoples and states of the world with the exception of the 26 members of the Organization for Economic Corporation and Development (OECD).<sup>1</sup> It was also



assumed that a country could not be developed or be developing if it did not have industry and proper trade. Therefore, development in these terms referred to economic growth or industrialization, political restructuring or a democratic political system, and modernization; that is, the building of institutions and standards that were more or less based on a western model. This was the kind of development that the new independent nations clamored for since they had to be able to survive on their own without any directives from their colonial masters.

For the new nations to be able to take off on their own, it was deemed necessary for programmes to be put in place and aimed at modernizing these new nations through the creation of infrastructures such as roads, railway, commercial centers, hospitals, and schools. The fact that this take-off approach was based on modernization theory was problematic because people who do not have adequate access to basic needs would not be concerned with infrastructure. With the introduction of infrastructure and new programmes, the indigenous institutions were destroyed, and new forms of social control emerged, as exemplified by the introduction of formal educational systems, school uniforms and birth control in these new nations. Modernization, which is a paradigm that highlights the “historical process of great changes and transformation from traditional agricultural society to the modern industrial society” (Chuanqi, 2004: 4) was not compatible with indigenous ways of knowing. The building blocks of modernization theory include health, elementary and further education, and economic resources from basic production to mass consumption. Modernization theorists such as Black (1966), Apter (1965 and 1987), Eisenstadt (1998) and So (1990) focus on the social, political

and cultural consequences of economic growth and the conditions that are important for industrialization and economic growth to occur.

However, the modernization approach to development when applied to the African context has implications for indigenous African cultures as was the case in Nigeria, and the Niger Delta region in particular, where the majority of the people have still to witness substantial improvement in their daily socio-economic lives. The activities of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region has further degraded the environment and impacted negatively on the local citizens' means of livelihood. There are no healthcare facilities in Obelle and Obagi communities where oil exploration activities are impacting on the people's health. Although there are elementary schools in Obelle and Obagi communities, they are ill equipped and most students in these schools do not have any hope for further education. Modernization, depicted as a progressive force, has not improved the living conditions of people confronting deprivations in Obelle and Obagi communities (See detailed discussion in chapters 5 and 6). Although it can be argued that Nigeria, as a nation, has experienced economic growth, this has occurred to the detriment of social development. The quality of life for most Nigerians is not secure, as there is inadequate support for the most vulnerable citizens and the Nigerian government has not ensured equal opportunity for its citizens.

With the rise to prominence of developmentalism in the 1980s, there was a shift in focus by the West to a market economy with less emphasis on Third World development as was the case under the Modernization paradigm. This shift was preceded in the 1950s by some Third World countries re-identifying, changing, and loosening their economic dependence on industrialized countries, and promoting national independence through

technical assistance in development projects. These attempts included the overthrow or at least the renegotiation of western developmentalist ideas (Mason, 1997). Some of these attempts include the 1955 non-alignment<sup>2</sup> conference held in Bandung, which represented the earliest collective attempt to establish a bloc of Afro-Asian nations outside the magnetic field of western countries. The conference's stated aims were to promote Afro-Asian economic and cultural cooperation and to oppose colonialism or neocolonialism by the United States, the Soviet Union, or any other imperialistic nation.<sup>3</sup>

Development theorists, to a large extent, believed in the doctrine of evolutionary progress through natural selection, which was transformed into Social Darwinism: the doctrine of the survival of the fittest.<sup>4</sup> To most people, evolutionary progress was seen as compatible with the notion that human beings, unlike animals or plants, could acquire the prerequisites of social development through learning European ways (Worsley 1984:16-17). The achievement of political independence of most Third World countries was widely assumed to make possible rapid economic growth for the general well being of the people and was largely publicized by Rostow (1960). The ontological assumption of development theorists was that the only way to achieve economic development was to shift resources (capital and labour) out of the traditional sectors into the modern sectors, which would then make it possible to industrialize. Consequently, developing countries could become industrialized through a series of stages by which they would eventually reach the "take off stage," the point where their development would lead them to catch up to the economies of industrialized countries, and perceived as "modern" or "developed" countries, moving towards a positive direction. However, such

development theories had limitations in achieving desired progress as will be evident in this study since communities in the Niger Delta have not experienced substantial economic growth and lack basic necessities of life.

Marx (1973) also saw development as a positive phenomenon. In his discourse on historical materialism, he explains the evolution of modes of production and the emergence of qualitatively higher and more superior modes of production. He saw social evolution as revolutionary, progressive and necessary (Marx 1973:109 –110). For Marx, therefore, “there is an increasing abundance and power to appropriate the natural environment as a goal of humanity and the key to continuing general human improvement” (Clow and Felt 1995:253). Development is thus seen as involving the imposition of a capitalist world market that would sustain First World wealth through access to strategic natural resources in the ex-colonial world and the opportunity for Third World countries to emulate First World civilization and living standards. Development has become a blueprint for the world’s nation states, as well as a strategy for world order, to be pursued rather than a progressive outcome. However, this has not been the case in most developing countries, including Nigeria, where communities in the Niger Delta region were not involved in the ten-year development plan of the 1970s when agriculture was the focus of development. Also, in contemporary Nigeria, communities in the region including the people of Obelle and Obagi do not have right of ownership to their lands or the power to appropriate the natural environment for their individual or collective improvement.

Appropriation of land by the Nigerian government and oil multinational corporations has meant that fewer local citizens have direct access to land and therefore, are unable to

provide for their families. With or without Marx's analysis of historical materialism, development or modernity has become the standard by which all societies are judged, leading to the assumption that, with the end of the division between the colonizers and the colonized, modernity was there for the taking by the underdeveloped nations. This view offered not only a new strategy for improving the material base of the Third World, but also a strategy for re-imposing order in the world.

A bone of contention among most feminists is that development policies in most cases, particularly in developing countries, did not incorporate women. Women were often perceived as unknowledgeable and passive objects lacking culture and needing to be developed. In order to bridge this gap and promote equality for all citizens, feminist development proponents argued for the inclusion of women in development. Particularly important for this analysis is the Women in Development (WID) perspective which postulates that the exclusion of women from the development process is the major cause of gender subordination in development (Tinker, 2004: 69). Consequently, WID focuses on projects that incorporate women, arguing that the solution lies in increasing women's productivity and income, as well as their ability to look after their households. The use of the WID perspective for this analysis lies in the fact that women, particularly African women, as in most parts of the world, are involved in the domestic and social reproduction of their households and communities. Consequently, development projects that incorporate women and aid in creating and/or increasing their income, will ultimately affect their ability to care for themselves and members of their households/communities. In other words, development projects empower them by giving

them economic independence that would enable them to perform their roles in their families and communities.

However, development did not favour all the nations as the core nations developed and grew economically to the detriment of the peripheral states (McMichael, 2004: 3). Studies led by Raul Prebisch, Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, suggested that economic activity in the richer countries often led to serious economic problems in poorer countries. This outcome constituted dependency, which was not predicted by neoclassical theory that assumed economic growth to be beneficial to all even if the benefits were not always equally shared. Neoclassical theory often asserts that the poorer countries were late in coming to solid economic practices and that, as soon as they applied the principles of modern economics, poverty would begin to subside. Marxist theorists however view persistent poverty as a consequence of capitalist exploitation, a process whereby the class that owns and controls the means and tools of production exploits the labour of those who do not own or control the means of production through minimum wage, in order to maximize their profits. This perspective led to the rejection of developmentalism and the seeking of alternative routes for poverty alleviation.

Dependency theory, therefore, became a possible way of explaining the persistent poverty of the poorer countries, enabling “us to see the internal situation of these countries as part of world economy” (Dos Santos, 1993: 194). Like Marxism, dependency theory argues that the best way for a country to be more like the developed industrial countries is to actually join the ranks of exploiting countries, at least on a regional level. Scholars have defined dependency as an “explanation of the economic

process of development states in terms of the external influences--political, economic, and cultural--on national development policies (Osvaldo 1969). Others, like Dos Santos (1971), have defined dependency as a historical condition, which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favours some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economies. He further posits that “a situation results in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which their own is subjected” (Dos Santos, 1993: 194).

Most dependency theorists regard international capitalism as the motive or force behind dependency relationships between developed and developing countries. Andre Gunder Frank, one of the earliest dependency theorists, makes the point that world capitalist system has enforced a rigid international division of labor, which is responsible for the underdevelopment of many areas of the world (cited in Dos Santos, 1971). The dependent states supply cheap minerals, raw agricultural commodities, and labour, and also serve as the repositories of surplus capital, obsolescent technologies, and manufactured goods. These functions orient the economies of the developing states toward the outside; money, goods, and services do flow into dependent states, but the allocation of these resources is determined by the economic interests of the dominant states, and not by the economic interests of the dependent states.

Dependency theory is, in large part, a theory of development that takes place in the Third World. One of its strengths is its recognition that, from the beginning, capitalism was developed as a multinational system linking the economic growth of core nations with the exploitation of peripheral nations. It recognizes that this core-peripheral

development had different features in the core than in the periphery, where the disadvantages of the relationship were evident in both the economic and political realms. Dependency is explained by an import substitution process in developing countries that serve as sources of raw materials to developed countries with industries for processing goods. Evolving from the dependency school of thought, is the World Systems theory. World Systems theorists such as Immanuel Wallerstein posit that both the semi-peripheral and peripheral countries are exploited and kept in a state of backwardness by the developed core. As is the case in Nigeria, the core nations represented by the MNCs, profit from the peripheries' cheap, unskilled labour and raw materials because the periphery (ies) lack the skilled workforce and indigenous industries that can process raw materials locally.

Dependency theory, attempts to explain the present underdeveloped state of many nations in the world, such as Nigeria, by examining the patterns of interactions among nations and by arguing that inequality among nations is an intrinsic part of those interactions. The patterns of interactions among nations are also affected whenever there is a political or economic shift in the world.

Whenever there are major political and economic changes in the world, there will arise a shift in the structure of capitalism. In the 1950s and 1960s, international trade consisted of raw materials flowing from the periphery to the industrialized core of the world economy, while manufactured exports were sent by firms in the US, Europe and Japan to all corners of the globe (Gereffi, 1995: 100). Accordingly, as noted by Gereffi (1995: 100), the most dynamic industries today are transnational in scope. Therefore, modern industrialization is the result of an integrated system of global trade and



production. Since the Second World War, productive capacity, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s has been dispersed to an unprecedented number of developing as well as industrialized countries. New patterns of specialization between countries entail the fragmentation and geographic relocation of manufacturing processes on a global scale in ways that slice through national boundaries. This process has been referred to as economic globalization and is generally seen as a process whereby “corporations are increasingly disconnected from their home countries as manufacturers, traders, bankers, and buyers simultaneously scour the globe for profitable opportunities” (Gereffi, 1995: 101).

### **3.2.2 Globalization**

Globalization is a social-reality<sup>5</sup> that rearranges the power structure of the society. It has reinforced the power and enriched the lives of some and has threatened the livelihood and impoverished the lives of many others (Elabor-Idemudia, 1997: 4). This process has maintained the structure of the society into the “haves” and “have-nots.” Positively, globalization represents a progressive expansion of individual choice, elimination of life threatening diseases, prolonged life expectancy and socio-economic growth.

Globalization, as a developmental trend under capitalism, has been associated with human exploitation and environmental degradation, as well as in the creation of new economic opportunities for people who were previously poor and marginalized (Sweetman, 2000). It has received contradictory assessments in the literature. One school of thought sees it as positive and necessary, especially for the progress of human

civilization (Pearson, 2000; Walby, 2000; the UN, 1996; and the UN, 1999). Others have critiqued it as a phenomenon with detrimental consequences for humans, particularly women in developing countries (Giddens, 1999; Panos, 1999; and Pearson, 1995).

Although globalization is a problematic concept, its proponents have defined it as a “process by which resources, technologies and expertise are brought together to bring about improved rates of economic growth in an area variously designated as the Third World, developing world, the periphery, or the South” (Nalini et al 1997: 69). Positively, therefore, it depicts a progressive expansion of individual choice, elimination of life-threatening diseases, prolonged life expectancy, as well as socio-economic growth. According to Saro-Wiwa (1992: 58-59) “the relocation of MNCs to countries of the South, particularly Nigeria, has had detrimental consequences for the local people and has not provided them with new economic opportunities and other progressive individual choices.” Instead, the process of globalization that encouraged the relocation of MNCs to countries of the South has undermined the culture of these people (Kabeer, 1994). Consequently, the cultural, environmental, and ideological values of the local citizens have been negatively affected.

It has been argued that colonialism set the stage for continued exploitation of the ex-colonial nations after their independence because of the economic relationships that were forged between the colonizers and the colonized (McMichael, 2004). For example, the basic pattern was to establish in the colonies specialized extraction and production of raw materials and primary products, forcing the colonies into export monoculture that stimulated European industrialization (McMichael, 2004: 9).

The development vision portrayed by United States president Henry Truman in his January 1949 inaugural speech assumed that all countries have an equal arena for economic growth. Hence, at independence, Third World nations were encouraged to pursue the European way, without the resources to accomplish this (McMichael, 2004: 8). However, the institution of bilateralism and multilateralism ensured that “large-scale loans were made available to states for national infrastructural projects such as dams, highways, and power plants” (McMichael, 2004: 44). By the 1970s and 1980s there were contradictions in many development projects as most Third World countries experienced food shortage and hunger. This crisis resulted in a shift from National development to global economic growth resulting in economic globalization, when “the World Bank redefined development in the 1980s as the successful participation in the world market” (McMichael, 2004: 115). With globalization, all markets were seen as political and economic institutions, with international agencies such as the World Bank and IMF dictating the regulatory principles in the global market transactions (McMichael, 2004: 115).

Scholars such as Hall (1991), Appadurai (1990 and 1996), Pearson, (2000), and Sweetman (2000) have variously conceptualized globalization in economic, political, cultural, environmental, and ideological terms. Political globalization focuses on worldwide meetings that have taken place to formulate global declarations aimed at protecting the basic human rights of citizens. These declarations have taken into account new circumstances and impending shortages in the quality of life, resulting in social, security, democratic and environment deficits as a consequence of globalization. Examples of these declarations are the Declaration of Valencia, the Earth Charter, the

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities of the InterAction Council. Political globalization focuses on the need for a more fundamental cooperation in the field of governance in a globalized world. The government of a country with domestic or regional problems should not be left alone to resolve the issues but should do so in alliance and in cooperation with governments of other countries. The world's governments need to cooperate to remedy the deficits mentioned above since these are worldwide problems that require worldwide approaches. Obviously, political globalization advocates "new governance," that is, a new type of government, in addition to the classical form based on constitutions, national legislation, and international covenants. Ultimately, the ideal "new governance" should be a symbiosis of governments, the business community, and civil society. However, the symbiotic relationship at the global level of political participation does not benefit all people at the grassroots whose voices are not included in decision-making. An example, are the local citizens in Obelle and Obagi communities who do not have a voice in the governance or control of the natural resources found in their land.

Cultural globalization involves worldwide interconnections, whereby a number of traditional practices, whole ways of life and worldviews disappear or integrate with others into one as a result of increasing global cultural contact (Hall, 1991). Through global contact and interconnections, cultural traditions mix and create new practices and worldviews or result in cultural revival/revitalization as a resistance to global encroachment (Appadurai, 1996). Consequently, local cultures adapt global symbols to specific local contexts and are thereby themselves constantly modified (Hall, 1991;

Appadurai 1996). The emerging global culture is, therefore, a reference system that organizes cultural diversity worldwide. The emerging global culture consists of universal categories and standards by which cultural differences become mutually intelligible and compatible.

Economically, globalization has been associated with institutions such as the IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organization (WTO) with an aim to promote a specific kind of homogenized development that frees the largest corporations in the world to invest and operate in markets everywhere. The objective of these corporations is to mass-produce and mass-market; hence, they prefer homogenized consumers and also locations with low wages, cheap resources, and the least restrictive environmental and labour laws. The objective of economic globalization is to benefit the largest corporations in the world at the expense of nation-states and their citizens.

Economic globalization involves the organization of global capital without due consideration for the local population where the MNCs are located or relocated. The process undermines and disrupts indigenous/traditional cultures. Although some literature such as Walby (2000), Pearson (2000), and the UN (1999) have argued that the processes of globalization are geared toward development and improvement of life for the local population, I posit that, the majority of people become displaced and alienated from their traditional means of livelihood without adequate alternatives, although, there are usually elements of improvement in the socio-economic standard of people's lives under globalization.

In as much as the focus of this study is on the implication of economic globalization (based on the production and consumption of goods and services) on the citizenry, the findings of the study's research has implications for the cultural, political, moral and social realms of the society. Specifically, this study aims to examine the detrimental consequences of uneven application of international and national regulations to the exploration and extraction of crude oil in Nigeria under globalization. This enables the analysis of my proposition that globalization exacerbates ethnic conflict, that in turn, impacts on people's lives in general, and women and children in particular. It is my position in this study that oil exploration in Nigeria has not resulted in the improvement of people's lives because of the uneven application of regulatory standards in oil exploration and extraction. The result has been environmental degradation, destruction of people's means of livelihood, destitution, and marginalization. The main reason for taking this position is that for over four decades of political independence, Nigeria has made a series of efforts towards economic development yet the majority of the people have not witnessed significant improvements in their living conditions despite its rich natural resources and years of oil exploration. This has resulted in political instability, ethnic and civil unrest, alienation and class conflicts within the nation (Falola and Ihonvbere 1988: 11). These struggles have impacted negatively on the poor masses, the bulk of whom are women, poor men and children.

In order to determine the extent to which the uneven application of the processes of globalization affect women's economic activities (specifically their household economy) and to further explore how these in turn affect gender relations and ethnicity, attention is focused on: gender relations in the family/community, ethnic relations in the

communities, and class relations. I will now examine each of these variables/factors in the following sections.

### **3.2.3 Gender Analysis of Family Relations**

Gender<sup>6</sup> is a human invention, which organizes social relations in everyday life, as well as in the major social structures such as social class and the hierarchies of bureaucratic organizations (Krieger, 2005). As an integral part of daily experiences of both women and men, gender is embedded in the images, ideas, and language of a society and is used as a means to divide work, allocate resources, and distribute power. Accordingly, Nelson and Robinson (1999) present gender relations as a cultural and historical system that regulates males and females in all spheres of human interactions.

Historically, gender relations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria were flexible, particularly for women, as male roles were open to any woman who could distinguish herself as hardworking and industrious (Amadiume, 1987: 27-8). However, the advent of colonialism greatly affected the structural position of women within their families and communities. The colonial conquest of Nigeria introduced Western concepts that carried strong gender and class inequalities supported by a rigid gender ideology and construction; that posit a woman as always a female regardless of her social achievements or status. According to Nwabara (1977: 60-61), in the early nineteenth century, the total enrolment for the nine schools in the Niger Delta was 538 boys and 184 girls. The sex imbalance in the schools was further supported by the provision of opportunities for advanced education in vocations that were usually considered male, such as carpentry, tailoring, and printing. Therefore, only men had access to higher

education, and they were the first to become trained teachers when the need arose for indigenous West African teachers. While women remained at home, “men served as learner clerks and were trained for government services and trading with European firms” (Nwabara 1977: 60-62). While boys were prepared for government, trade, industry, and educational services, girls were prepared for domestic services, and taught cooking, cleaning, childcare, and sewing. The reason for this treatment was embedded in the values of the colonialists, values that led the British to assume that Nigerian girls and boys, as well as women and men, should be treated and should behave as people supposedly did in “civilized” Victorian England. Therefore, strong male domination was imposed on the people indirectly by the new economic structure and directly by the recruitment of only men into the colonial administration; “the only place for women was the home” (Amadiume 1987: 136).

Traditionally, women’s involvement in agricultural production in this region and their control of the subsistence economy gave them easy access to markets and cash. This system placed women in a more favourable position for the acquisition of wealth, and formal political power and authority. Women’s centrality in the production and sale of palm oil and palm kernels in the traditional Niger Delta communities, for example, gave them a considerable advantage over their husbands.

The introduction of pioneer oil mills by the colonial administrators and Western merchants who traded in palm oil in the region mechanized the whole process of extracting the palm oil and cracking the kernels. This mechanization meant higher oil yields, which necessitated bulk buying by local agents of the mills and the channelling of most of the palm fruits to the mills. The main centre of production was therefore



shifted from the family to the mills. This also meant “wives lost the near monopoly they employed in the traditional method of production and the independent income they derived from it” (Okigbo 1965: 418). These shifts, processes and the restructuring of the political and economic spheres in the Niger Delta communities resulted in women becoming more constrained, less mobile, and generally poorer. Men, on the other hand, became richer, in their newfound wealth as a result of the mechanized process of extracting palm oil and cracking kernels. Consequently, women were no longer wealthy and were fully pre-occupied with the sheer struggle for subsistence alone, as the shift in method of processing removed them from the palm oil market of the 1940s and 1950s.

The changes in the relations/means of production brought about by the introduction of new social, political, and economic institutions by the colonial administration in the early nineteenth century reversed women’s economic ascendancy and independence. Corroborating this view, Okigbo (1965: 418) noted that, “not only did women lose some degree of economic independence and their monopoly over the processing and sale of certain food items, they also lost their power of applying economic sanctions in both the domestic and the public spheres as men found a new independence in work or trade relations with European firms and business.

The relocation of MNCs to developing countries interfered with traditional lifestyles and upset gender relations in both positive and negative ways, as was the case in the early nineteenth century colonial administration in Nigeria. The economic restructuring in non-western countries under colonial administration resulted in massive migration from the rural areas to the urban centers, thereby disrupting gender relations. Often, women were left behind to care for the young, elderly, and sick without adequate

assistance from the men. Men were trained for employment in the cities while women were only given training on how to care for the home. In contemporary times, MNCs have taken advantage of the traditional labour force in these countries, particularly that which resulted from colonialism, and utilized this force for their needs and benefit. The utilization of the traditional labour force by the MNCs has also interfered with the traditional lifestyles and gender relations that had existed in these societies. This practice has reinforced the subordination and discrimination against women, which were largely introduced during the colonial era.

Global capital has served to empower some women who moved up, especially in situations where the women's positions in the traditional cultural lifestyle were those of subjugation and subordination and disempowered others who moved down. The implication for women of empowerment for some and disempowerment for others is that family relations and traditional lifestyles were disrupted, creating social and political change, alienation and other social problems like those resulting from mass migration to city centres. The questions that need to be answered relate to women's empowerment and to the jobs available for women, particularly when they do not have any formal training in any skill.

According to Nwabara (1977: 60-62), gender relations during the colonial period favoured males over females, especially, in education and vocational training. He failed, however, to state how this favouritism affected gender relations in the family. Similarly, Okigbo (1965: 417-418) noted that with colonialism, women lost their economic independence and autonomy. Therefore, their power of applying economic sanctions both at home and in the community was eroded. He too, however, failed to state how

this affected gender relations in the family. Finally, Amadiume (1987) argued that policies initiated under the influence of Western prejudice, relegated women to the private and domestic sphere, but like other writers, she did not show how this relegation to the private sphere affected gender relations in the family. This study explores data that is useful in filling these gaps.

### **3.2.4 Oil Exploration in the Niger Delta**

Historically, the Niger Delta area was a complex system of chiefdoms and trading networks, known in the nineteenth century as the Oil Rivers, and based on the extensive trade in palm oil that gradually supplanted the slave trade. Palm oil was sold domestically as a vitamin-rich source of cooking oil that had ritual properties, and was also exported, primarily to British markets, where it lubricated the growing cosmetics industry and the heavy machinery of the industrial revolution.

The pre-colonial Niger Delta region was seen by Saro-Wiwa (1992: 12) as both an “Edenic paradise” and a “primitive” commune where production was for communal use, and where social, economic, ecological, and religious orders were integrated into “natural” rhythms and routines. According to Saro-Wiwa (1992: 12-13), “the land, rivers and creeks did not only provide sustenance in abundance, but were also a spiritual inheritance, sacred and bound up intricately with the life of the community.” Apter (1998: 124) observed that this cultural and spiritual “heritage was later spoiled by oil and stolen by the state.” Consequently, the devastation of land and water amounted to the destruction of tradition itself, a tradition that sustained a harmonious balance

between a natural ecology, economy, and community since the traditional cultural lifestyle of the people included aspects such as health and economic pursuits.

According to Apter (1998: 153) the crude oil economy may have energized domestic markets through the intensified circulation of money and commodities, but it enervated and undermined the real productive base of Nigeria. Furthermore, Apter (1998: 151-152) noted that, “crude oil exploration in Nigeria had undermined riverine ecosystems, and weakened the nation’s agricultural base when imported staples and the lure of easy money drew Nigerians away from the land and into the urban centers for the ‘petronaira’.” If the false wealth of oil ruined the nation and polluted the land and waterways, ecopolitics became a critical mode of rentier oil capitalism that violated the natural foundations of real wealth and legitimate commerce. Compared with the “natural” economy of the Niger Delta, the money and wealth of the contemporary national economy is unrelated to legitimate hard work. It can be said that the intense circulation of the oil wealth in Nigeria actually undermined the nation’s productive base. In other words, people now have a preference for oil wealth and would do anything to gain access to it through government contracts or grants rather than earn a wage through legitimate jobs that entail hard/productive work. Thus Apter (1998: 153) observed that, “as the ‘natural’ relation between wealth and hard work became more obscure, the pollution of the land and waterways became more apparent.”

The state, which is in cohort with the oil MNCs, is by extension guilty of the devastation in the Niger Delta. Over the years, the state, quite literally took possession of all mineral-rich land, extending its sovereignty into the earth through the 1978 Land Use Act, and appropriating oil and its revenue that gave the government access to the natural

resources. In view of this, Apter (1998: 154) noted that, “what the state seized, the oil companies destroyed, polluting the farmland and fishing creeks with spills and runoffs while filling the air with noxious gas and acid rain.” Thus, the ecological destruction of creeks and waterways in the remote areas of the Niger Delta is equated with the pollution of the cultural and public sphere by an invasive and extractive petro-state since oil is what gives the nation its foreign exchange.

Land and water have been the foundation of Niger Delta people’s way of life and what determines their cultural lifestyle. However, women have been the custodians of domestic and community consumption, and, consequently, the managers of the resources on which consumption depends. Both Saro-Wiwa (1992: 12-14) and Apter (1998: 124-154) neglected to highlight how the disruption and pollution of these foundations of the people’s lives have affected women’s household economy. This study fills this gap by interviewing Obagi and Obelle women on this issue.

### **3.2.5 Ethnic Relations in the Communities**

The invasion of Nigeria by the colonial administrators brought about the amalgamation of erstwhile kingdoms such as Benin and Oyo kingdoms and the Sokoto Caliphate, and the “divide and rule” tactics of the colonial government grouped these kingdoms together under one umbrella as “one country.” At independence, Nigeria was divided into regions according to the major ethnic groups. Politics and economics were rooted in these ethnic geographic regions, resulting in ethnic politics and the creation of regional marketing boards. According to Apter (1998: 125-126) “the Nigerian state was comprised of three semi-autonomous regions competing with each other for power at the

center.” He observed that these regions developed largely from cultural organizations and platforms that capitalized on ethnic affiliation, and through the consolidation of regional identities in terms of ethnicity and political party affiliation and regional marketing boards.

By 1966, the first of a series of military coups led by General Aguyi Ironsi took place in Nigeria. Since then the ethnic groups have been pitted against one another in their struggle for who gets what from the “national cake,” and who controls political and economic power. Even though the states have acted as administrative units since independence and depend upon the federal government for financial disbursement, ethnic blocks have continued to consolidate around economic as well as political resources and opportunities. Therefore, when people receive economic or political favours in the country today, ethnic interpretation is always understood to be the basis for such favours. Ethnic majorities such as the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo receive a large share of and most access to the “national cake.” They benefit more from the federal government formula of oil revenue allocation; thus, “the share of mineral rents for the minorities such as the Ijaw, Ogoni, and Ikwerre in the oil producing areas fell from twenty percent down to two percent and again to 1.5 percent and were never paid in most cases (Apter 1998: 129).

In all of the ethnic crises and conflicts that have plagued Nigeria, there have been serious allegations pointing to the fact that there has been a systemic strategy towards extreme discrimination of ethnic minority groups. These allegations are based on the lack of government initiatives in providing amenities for the basic human needs for minorities, particularly those in communities in the Niger Delta region<sup>7</sup> where there has

been a systematic siphoning of oil resources and revenue for use by ethnic majority groups. According to Saro-Wiwa (1992:89), “the majority of Ijaws in Rivers State are more interested in their own welfare than in establishing a fair and just state.” He further observed that “the constituent ethnic groups spend more time struggling for crumbs which fall from the federal table at which the ethnic majority preside than in creating social and economic progress” (Saro-Wiwa, 1992: 89). Furthermore, Saro-Wiwa (1992: 82) posits that the political structuring and revenue allocation have been used to marginalize completely the minorities in the Niger Delta region, grossly abusing their rights and veritably consigning them to extinction. The minorities in Nigeria, particularly those in the Niger Delta region, therefore, suffer a double jeopardy through alienation from their resources and their human rights.

The ethnic particularism that transcended the new Nigerian nation at independence became in many ways reinforced by the oil boom. Ethnicity was, and still is, deployed strategically to gain access to centralized resources. The federal government does the funding of almost every project in the country, and this in turn, has led to the channelling of projects to particular areas and the indigenes of these areas (Saro-Wiwa, 1992: 82-3). It is worthy of note that access is not limited only by ethnic majority favouritism, but also by a complex tapestry of factions and coalitions within and among ethnic groups, resulting in the development of reciprocal assimilation of the bourgeoisie on trans-ethnic lines. Ethnicity has remained viable as a cultural resource for establishing connections, but as competition intensified for the shrinking federal government budget, stratification and division were as marked within as well as between ethnic blocs, generating labile configurations of sudden opportunity rather than

entrenched positions of power and advantage (Adalikwu, 1995: 89-92). This stratification has resulted in a class structure in Nigeria, with a very few wealthy people at the top, few in the middle, and almost everyone else at the bottom of the class hierarchy.

### **3.2.6 Analysis of Class**

Although the prevalence of ethnicity has kept class lines fluid in Nigeria, different classes could still be identified based on land-ownership, income, education, and employment. The current mode of production that focuses on oil exploration backed by land decrees gives advantages to the oil MNCs and Nigerian bourgeoisies who have the resources to acquire large parcels of land. The majority of the population including the working poor are alienated from their land and do not control or have access to the means of production.

The inequitable sharing of the oil revenues has further stratified the society into a hierarchy of classes. A small minority of the population is enriched while a vast majority is impoverished. Although education is often viewed as a variable in achieving equitable distribution of scarce resources, only the bourgeoisie and petite bourgeoisie can access quality education that is needed in employment. Employment also tends to be reserved for the rich and therefore “well-connected” in the society.

However, both ethnicity and class affect each other, particularly in the sense that stratification can be seen as the principle that regulates the distribution of social advantage. Class and ethnic structure in Nigeria can be viewed as reinforcing each other. Members of the Nigerian bourgeoisie would identify themselves with members of their



class when it is most convenient to do so; that is, if they envisage that class membership would yield them the greatest benefits (Adalikwu, 1995: 89). For example, members of the same socioeconomic and political class ally with themselves if it gives them the best access to the nation's wealth. However, if in the process, conflict arises among them, members would seek support from people who are of their ethnic origin, but are, at the same time, members of the lower class. The relationship between class and ethnicity in Nigeria is a question of convenience and opportunity.

According to Soyinka (1996: 152), the “execution of Saro-Wiwa<sup>8</sup> was to remove the pivotal figure of opposition around which a united Niger Delta front could emerge” to fight the exploitative powers of the government and the oil MNCs. Another example is the resultant massacres, which started in 1990, when the paramilitary police, called “Kill and Go,” massacred about 80 Umuechem residents who demanded reparations from the Shell Petroleum Company; these struggles have been on going. These massacres, euphemistically termed “tribal” animosity, have been between various ethnic groups that include Ogoni and Andoni, Ogoni and Ijaw, and Ikwerre and Okrika. These massacres have been described by the local population as government violence against the poor masses, but they have been masqueraded as inter-ethnic conflicts.<sup>9</sup> These situations affect women but commentators have not given any voice to the women's everyday life experiences in these matters. It is therefore my intention to fill this gap and bring awareness of the women's situation, particularly, that of the women of the Ogba/Egi and Ikwerre ethnic groups whose communities can be said to be at the epic center of the Niger Delta region.

The literature reviewed so far has focused on the impact of colonialism and globalization in Nigeria, and in particular, the Niger Delta region. However, the effect on specific communities, women and their economic activities in Rivers State are yet to be studied. This study, therefore, explores the effect of the uneven application of the processes of globalization on women and the household economy in Obelle and Obagi communities of Rivers state to fill the gap. In doing so, it gives voice to women's everyday life experiences considering the effect of the oil MNCs' activities on their household economy.

### **3.3 Theoretical Framework**

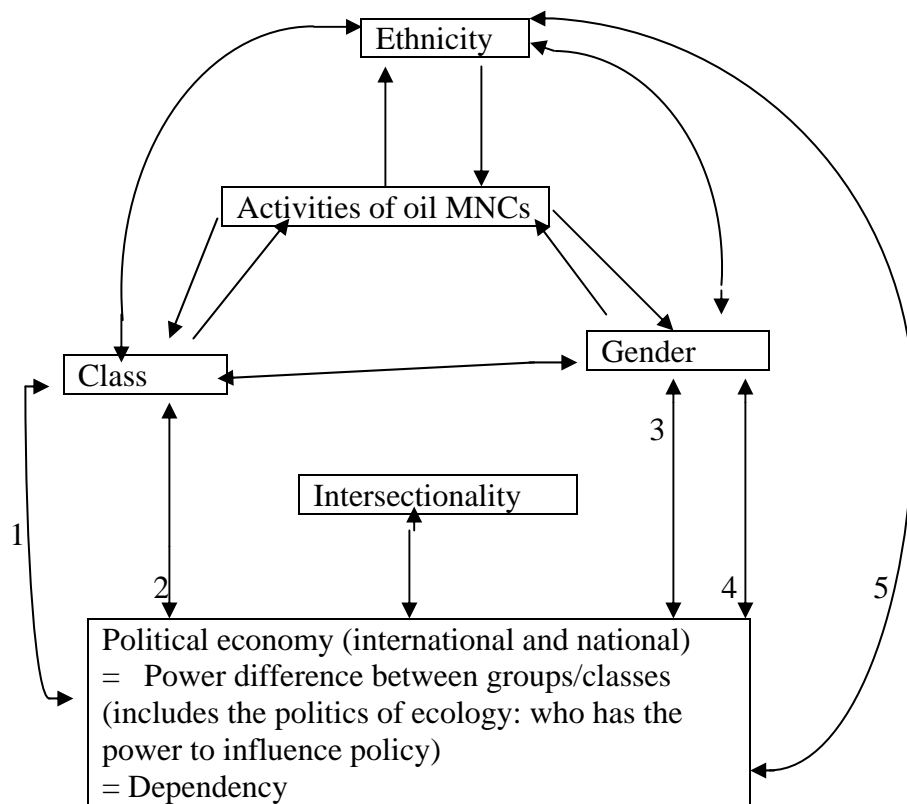
There are different forms of oppression and marginalization that cross paths to shape people's lives over time. The literature reviewed above focuses on how colonialism and the uneven application of the globalization processes could have an adverse effect on people's lives. The literature illustrates that people are oppressed and marginalized based on race/ethnicity, gender, and class.

In order to examine how ethnicity, class, and gender constitute mediating factors in the exercise of power and domination of vulnerable groups by MNCs, the need exists for examining their interlocking nature. This is served by the framework of intersection, which views the variables of ethnicity, class, and gender, as intersecting with each other and simultaneously oppressing and dominating individuals in time and space. The framework of Intersection informs us about the ways that different forms of injustice and exploitation can occur simultaneously to create a variety of marginalized positions (Stasiulis 1999: 350). The framework focuses on the experiences of people who have

been marginalized by virtue of their ethnicity, gender, and class. For example, the people of Obelle and Obagi who depend mostly on their land for sustenance and survival have become economically dependent as a result of the marginalization and alienation from the land by the oil MNCs in alliance with the Nigerian government. Consequently, the framework of intersection is used in this thesis to answer two broad questions: “Are these people marginalized because of their ethnicity or are there other factors that mediate the situation?” and “Do people of all classes and gender feel the marginalization in the same way or do some experience it more than others? It should be noted that the experience of gender subordination and oppression vary within different classes, ethnicities, and economic contexts; consequently, intersection framework explains the different dimensions of oppression and marginalization that are being felt by men, women, and children of different socio-economic classes and ethnicity.

The following is a diagrammatic representation of my intersectionality framework.

**Diagram 1: Intersectionality Framework**



**KEY:**

1	Degree of power based on class
2	Relationship to the means of production
3	Biological determinism – differential power on the basis of sex
4	Patriarchal power differential due to gender
5	Power differential on the basis of ethnicity

As shown in the above diagram, an analysis of political economy has been employed in my discussion to further strengthen intersectional analysis. The framework of intersection explains the various dimensions by which different groups/classes are oppressed/marginalized. Political economy on the other hand, focuses on power differential among the different groups/classes, and the dependency relationships that

emerge in resource distribution and exchange among these groups. As illustrated in the diagram, 1) Different classes have different degrees of power to appropriate socio-economic resources 2) One's relationship to the means of production defines one's position in society i.e., one's socio-economic status 3) Most men and women are differently positioned in the power structure of society 4) Gender inequality is attributable to power differentials between men and women 5) The power differentials between ethnic groups determines which group has access to valued resources.

In the application of this theoretical framework, this study will show how the intersection of ethnicity, class, and gender produces a distinct result that is not captured by analyzing ethnicity, class, and gender separately. This is because problems arise when we generalize about heterogeneous structures and institutional mechanisms that produce varied patterns of oppression and privilege for women (and men) who are differently positioned within relations of ethnicity, class, and gender and a variety of other social divisions such as religion and language. The framework of Intersection allows all forms of oppression to be included as analytical categories for making sense of people's experiences. Such categories include phenomena such as imperialism, colonialism, sexuality, and a number of other forces and factors as a means to understanding inequality (Stasiulis, 1999: 349-50).

The framework of a political economy perspective makes it possible to explain the power differential between social classes, gender and ethnic groups and their relationship to social change and social inequality. The conception of power here is concerned with how human beings relate to the means and objects of labour as proposed by Satzewich (1999: 313-4) in view of the fact that one's relationship to the means of

production defines a person's position within the larger class structure of a society and defines the nature of social relations between groups. As an example, in Obagi, members of the chief council have the most power in the community and within this group of councillors there are varying degrees of power, with the Eze Umuobor having the most power. As shown in some of the in-depth interview responses, the more power a chief or councillor has, the closer they are to the means of production/economic resources and, in this case, the closer they are to royalty and job contracts from the oil MNCs. As evident from structure of the Obagi council of chiefs, a political economy framework could broadly be defined as "the study of power derived from or contingent on a system of property rights; the historical development of power relations; and their cultural and social embodiment" (Marchak, 1985: 673).

The advantage of a political economy approach is that it enables one to tackle a variety of issues, including the relationship between economic and political power, the distribution of human beings into sites in the relations of production, the organization of the labour process, how social inequalities are produced and maintained, and the consciousness and actions of collectivities who occupy different positions in the relations of production. Consequently, the analysis for this study centers mainly on how gender and ethnically defined collectivities become slotted into certain positions in Nigeria, and particularly in the Niger Delta; how the collectivities control access to valued resources as in the case of the Egi council in Obagi; how the chiefs and councillors are able to maintain their positions of privilege; how class relations within these gender and ethnic collectivities structure both in-group and out-group relations;

and how these collectivities try to resist, seek access to, and accommodate themselves to their places in the society.

Additionally, a political economy framework enables one to examine how the workings of political economic forces at international and national levels have affected development trends in Nigeria, and have resulted in persistent and continuous inter- and intra-ethnic conflicts and class struggle. Furthermore, it makes it possible to explain the consequences of conflicts and class struggle for women and men in Obelle and Obagi communities.

Another advantage of using the framework of political economy is that it enables one to explain how the process of globalization, a phenomenon of capitalist expansion, intensifies economic, social, and political inequalities by privileging the private over the public sphere and by marginalizing the actual and potential importance of the common population (Elabor-Idemudia 1997: 6), the majority of whom are women and children. Consequently, the application of the political economy framework in this study fosters an understanding and explanation of how and why the Nigerian government favours privatization and makes available a conducive economic environment for foreign MNCs to the detriment of the local citizens.

The political economy lens also poses questions that centre on power and dependency relationships involving resource distribution and exchange emanating from the on-going capitalist mode of production, which is manifested through the activities of the oil MNCs. This lens makes it possible to explain how and why Nigeria has remained in partnership with neo-colonialist interests whose decisions it does not control.

A political economy perspective includes, as well, a political ecology analysis, which illustrates how those “without power, fight in order to prevent the destruction of the environmental foundations of their livelihood” (Bryant 1992: 14); for example, local citizens in the Niger Delta, particularly women and youth groups in Obelle and Obagi, fight to prevent the degradation of their environment and ecosystem by the activities of oil MNCs by peaceful demonstrations, writing petitions, rioting, and violent confrontations.

Generally defined, political ecology combines the concerns of ecology and a broadly defined political economy. These two concepts together encompass the “constantly shifting dialectics between society and land-based resources; also within classes and ethnic groups within society” (Bryant 1992: 13). Political ecology also involves state policies, interstate relations, and global capitalism. Using the political ecology analysis, one could examine and explain how the inter-linked nature of the Nigerian state and commercial interests within and outside Nigeria has affected the household economy in the oil producing communities in the Niger Delta, particularly in Obelle and Obagi. The political ecology analysis also enables one to explain how interaction of the state and the oil MNCs with the diverse ethnic groups can militate against long-term environmental stability; this has so far manifested itself in the destruction of plant and aquatic life in Obelle and Obagi communities as narrated by some of the participants of the in-depth interview.

State policies play a pivotal role in contemporary human-environmental interaction. Policies do not develop in a political and economic vacuum but result from struggle between competing actors seeking to influence policy formulation. These actors may



include all or most of the following: government, MNCs/TNCs, national corporations, NGOs, multilateral agencies, and foreign governments. In Nigeria, state policies are not based on economic nationalism, but rather on TNCs' and MNCs' environmental practices, which do not protect the people in situations such as pipe blowout causing spillage because the oil MNCs in the Niger Delta region continue to use worn-out oil pipes in their areas of operation. The Nigerian government does not have control over the terms of trade and oil exploration by the oil MNCs because the government does not have the financial and technological means of the oil conglomerates to invest in this sector (Hajzler 2000: 75). Burdened with debts, which it is unable to repay, Nigeria adopted the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) that favour private sector export activities (crude oil at the expense of food) (George 1988, Watts 1990). The goal and processes of the SAP have constituted complete freedom for MNCs in their use and abuse of the environment.

The role of women in conflict over access to environment and land resources is crucial but often neglected. In gender-derived inequalities, household relations are a deeply contested terrain (Watts 1989: 12), in which access to environmental resources remains a bitter source of conflict, and a powerful source of social division. Although the struggle for access did not originate with capitalism and colonialism, capitalism and colonialism have exacerbated and perpetuated ethnic and class struggle in Nigeria. For example, the MNCs take advantage of the ethnic rivalry to maximize profit. This explains why it is a common-sense belief in the Niger Delta that the state and the oil MNCs manipulate and pit the ethnic groups against each other in order to keep them weakened and distracted from the source of their exploitation and domination.

For this research, the framework of intersection has enabled and facilitated an analysis of the situation of women in the Niger Delta region, particularly those who are adversely affected by the process of economic globalization, as the framework underpins research that gives voice to many marginalized and oppressed people. The framework of the analysis of these concepts in this research, therefore, is an integrative one, in view of the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. Corroborating this, Henry et al, (2000: 27) noted that intersection focuses on how different forms of oppression cross paths to shape our experiences.

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- <sup>1</sup> The OECD bloc is made up of the 26 richest countries in the world. These countries have about 16 percent of the world population but control two thirds of its merchandise i.e., tradable goods. They produce three fifths of the world's exports and supply four fifths of the world's aid while enjoying a mean per capita Gross National Product (GNP) of over 18, 000 US dollars. One could also argue that there is a fourth world – a world where men, women, and children are condemned to live in extreme poverty.
- <sup>2</sup> The origin of the Non-aligned movement has been traced to the 1955 conference hosted in Bandung, Indonesia. Non-aligned nations are those who consider themselves not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. The purpose of non-alignment is to ensure “the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries in their struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid, racism, including Zionism, and all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, domination, interference or hegemony as well as against great power and bloc politics.” Usually, the non-alignment movement focuses on national struggles for independence, the eradication of poverty, economic development and opposing colonialism, imperialism, and neo-colonialism. Also, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandung\\_Conference](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandung_Conference).
- <sup>3</sup> The Bandung Conference was a meeting of some Asian and African states, most of which were newly independent, organized by Egypt, Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), India, and Pakistan. The conference met April 18-24, 1955, in Bandung, Indonesia, and was coordinated by Indonesian Foreign Minister Ruslan Abdulgani. Twenty-nine countries representing over half the world's population sent delegates. Major debate centred on the question of whether Soviet policies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia should be censured along with Western colonialism. A consensus was reached in which “colonialism in all of its manifestations” was condemned, implicitly censuring the Soviet Union, as well as the West. The Final Communiqué of the Conference underscored the need for developing countries to loosen their economic dependence on the leading industrialized nations by providing technical assistance to one another through the exchange of experts and technical assistance for developmental projects, as well as the exchange of technological know-how and the establishment of regional training and research institutes. The conference ultimately led to the establishment of the Non-aligned Movement in 1961.
- <sup>4</sup> Social Darwinism has its roots in the nineteenth century.
- <sup>5</sup> Social reality consists of the accepted social tenets of a community and people's daily lived experiences with the community. It entails the context for all the things (culture, religion, government, art, business, and health) that allow us to function as social beings in a social structure. See John Searle (1997) *The Construction of Social reality*.
- <sup>6</sup> Gender refers to the culturally and socially constructed differences between females and males found in the meanings, beliefs, and practices associated with “femininity” and “masculinity.” Sociologists believe that social and cultural processes, and not biological “givens,” are most important in defining what females and males are, what they should do, and what sorts of relations do or should exist between them.
- <sup>7</sup> Saro-Wiwa (1992), made a case for the Ogonis, one of the minority ethnic groups in the Niger Delta region. He observed that Nigerian's national programme for universal health and primary education does not benefit ethnic minorities such as Ogoni, as the communities here lack basic needs such as water, roads, health care, and even primary schools. See Saro-Wiwa (1992) *Genocide in Nigeria: The Ogoni Tragedy*. Lagos: Saros International Publishers.
- <sup>8</sup> Ken Saro Wiwa was hanged in 1995 by the Nigerian military government for having led the protests of the Ogoni people against the exploitation of their lands by Western petroleum companies. He campaigned for the most basic of human rights: the right for clean air, land and water as he spoke out against the environmental damage to the Niger Delta caused particularly by Shell Oil through its 37 years of drilling in the region. Critiques over the years have argued that his only crime that led to his death was his success in bringing his cause to international attention.
- <sup>9</sup> The presence and activities of military personnel and the level of devastation in the communities after a conflict has led to the argument by local citizens that the military often instigate and support a community against another community that opposes the detrimental activities of oil exploration. However, the government on the other hand, through the media, often exonerates itself and proclaims such conflicts as inter-ethnic conflicts. An example is when the military intervened in support of the

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Andonis in 1993 when they had a conflict with the Ogonis and many Ogoni citizens were massacred. Such acts over the years has led to the belief in the Niger Delta region that the Nigerian government in collaboration with the Oil MNCs instigate other ethnic groups against a community that opposes the mode of operation and devastating consequences of oil exploration in that region.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The major purpose of this study is to establish the uneven application of regulatory standards of globalization and the effects it has on the local citizens in the host communities. Consequently, communities were studied where the exploration for crude oil by MNCs is on going. This chapter focuses on the methods employed in achieving the objectives of this study. The discussions in the chapter are centred on the population and sample size, techniques of data collection, processing, and analysis.

#### **4.2 Population and Sample**

One of the reasons for choosing Obelle and Obagi communities was the fact that crude oil exploration activities by MNCs are on going within their boundaries and obviously affect the people's lives and livelihoods. Another reason was my personal location within the Niger Delta region. Though I do not belong to either of the two ethnic groups chosen for this study, I am a member of an ethnic group in the Niger Delta region. The significance of my membership in the Niger Delta is based on the fact that, despite differences in the nature and scope of the impact the activities of the oil MNCs, most of the people from the Niger Delta region have been adversely affected by. Therefore, since the emphasis in a qualitative design is on minimizing the distance

between the researcher and the participants, the choice of Obagi and Obelle communities afforded me the opportunity to take advantage of my personal location as someone from the Niger Delta and to have considerable interaction with the participants, particularly those who spoke only in “pidgin” English.

The study focuses on two ethnic groups, the Obagi (in Obga/Egi-land) and the Obelle (in Ikwerre land), both located in Rivers State, which has Port Harcourt as the state capital and the “political seat” of the oil MNCs in the Niger Delta area. These two communities were purposefully selected on the basis that they are located in the heart of the Niger Delta region, the seat of crude oil exploration in Nigeria. They were also selected because they constitute information-rich cases through which much could be learned about issues of central importance to the objective of this study (Patton, 1990: 169). There has been oil exploration by oil MNCs in both communities for over 40 years, and, as a result, the local population has first hand experience of the effects of the oil companies’ activities and understands the oil politics better than other communities where oil exploration and exploitation is not going on.

Information was obtained on these two groups, the Obagi and Obelle, from two complementary sources. A survey provided quantitative information on these two communities while a set of in-depth interviews provided qualitative data primarily from women in these communities.

A survey approach was used with the administration of a structured questionnaire to two hundred (200) subjects who were randomly selected in the Obagi and the Obelle communities. One hundred (100) cases were selected from each community with a

composition of fifty (50) women and fifty (50) men. The rationale for these cases was dependent on selecting a random and statistically representative sample that would permit confident generalization from the sample to a larger population (Patton, 1990). For example, the findings could be generalized to other communities in the Niger Delta region where the activities of oil MNCs are being carried out.

For the qualitative research, a semi-structured interview approach was used for conducting the in-depth interviews with twenty-four (24) subjects who were purposefully selected because they constituted “key informants.” The selection of these subjects was done after talking with community leaders and enlisting their support in carrying out this study in their communities. Consequently, with the support of the field assistants and the elders, I did a purposive selection until the quota for each group was achieved. The purposive sample was based on the criterion that the technique gives one an opportunity to select respondents that have and would give information that is relevant to the study. In order to verify that respondents met this criterion, women from two categories were selected: self-employed and government/oil/private company workers. The goal of this selection method was to achieve both representativeness and relevance. Women in all categories of social classes were represented since the forces of global capital affect all classes of women, though in different ways. The selection of the other four (4) subjects out of the twenty four (24) was based on purposive sampling and is described in the section on qualitative data collection.

### **4.3 Techniques of Data Collection**

The instrument employed for data collection included a sixty-two item, self-administered questionnaire on the respondents' social characteristics (marital status, education, income), actual employment and employment needs, aspirations of participants, services rendered by MNCs to host communities, the effect of oil exploration on the people's lives, and the strategies the communities have for survival. The questionnaire combined both closed-ended and open-ended questions, which allowed the respondents to express their opinions and to discuss or explain the rationale behind their expressed attitudes. The responses obtained in the open-ended questions were later collapsed into appropriate categories for the purpose of coding and analysis.

The second instrument involved an in-depth interview protocol based on the same sixty-two items, as in the questionnaires. In-depth interviews were conducted with twenty local women (ten women from each ethnic group). The choice of this number of participants was influenced by the fact that qualitative research tends to be quite time-consuming and expensive and, with the limited funds I had, I could only involve a limited number of participants. The in-depth interviews consisted of open-ended questions and required the hiring of translators who translated the questions from English into the local languages and conducted the interviews based on these questions for those who did not speak the English language. Most importantly, these interviews concerned the quality of their lives (access to basic human needs), the effect of crude oil exploration on their economic activities, particularly their household economy, and their strategies for coping where the effects of oil exploration were negative.



In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with two community leaders in each of the two target ethnic groups in order to collect information about the services provided by the oil companies to their host communities. In-depth interviews with four community leaders were carried out because of their in-depth knowledge of the political and economic relationships between their communities, the oil MNCs and the government. The community leaders (in each community) consisted of a chief and a youth leader from the community's youth association.

Before conducting the survey, letters were sent to the leaders and traditional rulers of these communities seeking their permission and consent to administer questionnaires, as well as interview them and the community women. Without their approval, most of the subjects would not have been willing to participate. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, participants were assured of confidentiality and informed of their right to withdraw participation at anytime or decline to answer any question that made them uncomfortable. The date, time, and location of our meetings for the interviews were entirely chosen by the participants in order to protect them and assure them of confidentiality; this made the environment more accommodating and the participants amenable to answering most of the questions freely. All the interviews were audio recorded with their permission and occurred in the participants' homes, except for one interview that took place outside the gate of the TotalFinaElf (Total) Oil Company location in Obagi. As in the coding of the questionnaires, all the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and coded according to themes based on the interview protocol, as well as themes that emerged from participants' narratives and the relationship between the variables that made up the themes.

Utilizing qualitative procedures in the study also offered a critical backdrop for reflecting on the theories and statistical results. It is noteworthy that there have been few attempts, so far, to combine both qualitative and quantitative methods in the study of women (Miller, 1996).

This research focused extensively on the experiences of the local women, as revealed through the in-depth interviews (and the differences in gender analysis in chapter 5, where a comparison of the effect of oil exploration between women and men is quantitatively made and chapter 6, where analysis of the qualitative data mainly focuses on women). The use of quantitative methods enabled me to have a more accurate picture of the effect of global capital through the activities oil MNCs on gender and other variables such as age by potentially providing explanations as to how and why women and men, older people and younger people are affected differently. The quantitative data and analysis allowed me to develop a more comprehensive and detailed understanding of the context in which the women of the two ethnic groups in question work and live. This larger context was narrowed down to the experiences of women in the qualitative data collection. Therefore, the quantitative analysis is secondary to the qualitative analysis. The quantitative method also allowed for the collection of a large number of responses that were gathered in a reasonable time, with reasonable effort by using self-administered, closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires. The resulting statistical analyses act as a means of answering substantive questions about social relations, whether the primary motivation comes from theoretical issues or from practical concerns (Bohrnstedt and Knoke, 1994: 3).

#### **4.4 Data Processing and Analysis**

Coding of the responses from the questionnaires was preceded by a review of all the collected data. The review was done in order to designate appropriate collapsed categories for responses to the open-ended questions since the respondents worded their responses differently. However, most of the responses were quite similar in their orientation and themes, which to a large extent simplified the categorization process. Two examples follow as to how most of the variables were collapsed and recoded. Firstly for age group, the categories “less than 20” and “20 to 29” were collapsed to “under 29.” The category “30 to 39” remained the same, while categories “40 to 49”, “50 to 59”, and “60 and above” were collapsed into “over 39.” This was done because there were not many people in the older age categories in the sample. Secondly, “how oil exploration affects your life” was coded into the following categories: “badly/negatively,” “toxic pollution of environment,” “poor quality of life/health,” “setback in agricultural production,” “both positively and negatively,” “fairly positive,” and “neutral.” All of these categories were collapsed and recoded into “positive” and “negative”, indicating whether the activities of oil exploration in the communities affected the people positively or negatively.

When processing the collapsed/coded data, a combination of descriptive statistics based on cross tabulation was used to describe and compare respondents’ age, gender, ethnic group, economic background, family size, and education in relation to the effect of the activities of the oil MNCs. Details of this process is found in Chapter Five (5), where the analysis of these variables including gender are used to compare, confirm, or disprove what was revealed in the in-depth interviews. The survey data, therefore, were

analyzed using cross tabulation. Cross-tabulations, also known as "pivot tables" or "cross-tabs," are statistical reports that group data by one field, creating one column for each distinct value of another field. Cross-tabulation is the simplest technique for understanding patterns of differences between populations in a database. Cross-tabulations are useful when comparing results from different subsets of respondents, for example, how responses vary depending on age or gender. In this way, it was possible to compare how women and men or different age categories have responded. Thus, cross-tabulations, an example of bivariate analysis (that is, examining the relationship between two variables), gave me much more insight into the data than did simple frequency distributions. Sociologically speaking, the world works differently for different people and, as such, the use of cross-tabulation enabled me to explain how the activities of oil MNCs impacted differently on women and men, educated women and non-educated women, young and older women, and people of different ethnicity.

In addition, I analyzed thematically data from the in-depth interviews. Using critical ethnography, specifically feminist ethnography based on oral history, I analyzed the subjects' lived economic experiences, particularly women's household economy prior to the commencement of oil exploration. This aspect of the data was, in part, based on respondents' personal recollections. I then analyzed their present economic situation in relation to the historical structural change in their communities. Based on these analyses, I explained how globalization, through the activities of the oil MNCs, affected the lived realities of women, specifically, their household economy. Furthermore, I sought to study other themes used in my analysis, such as the state of oil exploration and

extraction in the Niger Delta region and the violence and brutality confronted by the local population as a result of oil exploration activities.

To enable the analysis of the qualitative data, I used Atlas.ti 5.0 computer programme, which is useful in the qualitative analysis of large bodies of textual data, such as interview transcripts. It enabled the exploration of the complex phenomena hidden in data that were measured, and analyzed relationships between categories that had been pre-determined and defined. Consequently, in transforming the data into useful knowledge, Atlas.ti became functional in visualizing emerging relationships from the study and was also useful in the graphic presentation of these relationships as shown in Chapter Six (6). Basically, Atlas. ti was used to electronically gather themes from the interview transcripts and used the themes to create diagrams, which were used to explain and analyze the association between variables.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The main focus of this chapter is the analysis of the association between the different variables that mediate the activities of the multinational oil corporations in the Niger Delta and, therefore, impact on the people's lives. Specifically, my focus is on Obelle community and Shell's oil exploration activities in the community, as well as Obagi community with TotalFinaElf's oil exploration activities. I focus on whether the uneven application of regulatory standards in oil exploration affects women's household economy. And if the oil MNCs in their activities, make use of existing ethnic rivalry in these communities to further retard the improvement of women's economic situations. The basic proposition for this study is that the processes of globalization have detrimental consequences for the local citizens in the Niger Delta region, particularly, in Obelle and Obagi communities. To present evidence in support of this proposition, frequency distributions and cross tabulations were used in the descriptive analysis of the relationships between the variables and responses from the in-depth interviews.

The following variables are used in the analysis of frequencies to determine the state of oil exploration in Obelle and Obagi communities:

- Awareness of oil exploration
- Impact of oil exploration on environment, economy, and access to basic needs
- Impact of oil exploration on ethnic tension
- Government and Oil Company's response to negative impact of oil exploration

A frequency analysis of the above variables was made, followed by a combination of descriptive statistics based on cross-tabulation to compare variables such as respondents' age, gender, ethnic group, economic background, family size, and education in relation to the effect of the activities of oil exploration in the region. Details of the variables and descriptive statistics are found in sections 5.3 and 5.4 of this chapter.

A total of 200 subjects (100 subjects each from Obelle and Obagi, with 50 men and 50 women from each community of various socio-economic backgrounds) filled out the questionnaires. In terms of personal income, 194 subjects responded. Personal income was used to indicate participants' socio-economic class because, in Nigeria, income also determines one's relationship to the means of production. The bourgeoisie have a high level of income, own, and control the means of production and the working class (proletariat have a low income) is often alienated from the means of production. Thirty-nine subjects (19.8 percent) indicated that they had no annual income. Ninety-six subjects (48.8 percent) indicated an estimate of an annual income below 763.65 USD. Another 39 subjects (19.8 percent) indicated an annual income between 763.65 to 2,290.95 USD; 15 subjects (7.7 percent) indicated an annual income between 2,290.96 to 4,581.90 USD. The remaining 5 subjects (2.5 percent) indicated an annual income of 5,345.56 USD and over. A total of 197 subjects indicated their highest educational qualification; 59.4 percent have a diploma, vocational training, or less and 40.6 percent have an undergraduate degree or more. Also, 198 subjects indicated their current occupations; 32.8 percent are government workers/civil servants, 10.6 percent are

farmers, 16.7 percent are traders/business persons, 20.2 percent are students, 9.1 percent have a vocational job, and 10.6 percent are unemployed.

## **5.2 Analysis of Frequencies**

The variables used in this analysis (listed above in section 5.1) were employed to determine the state of oil exploration in Obelle and Obagi communities. Consequently, when the participants were asked the state of oil exploration in their communities, the following were their responses. In response to their level of awareness of oil exploration in their community, 100 percent stated they were aware and also knew the name (s) of the oil company (ies).

When the question of the length of time oil exploration has been carried out in their community was asked, 84.7 percent recorded “36 to 45 years”, and 6.8 percent recorded “26 to 35 years”, while 4.7 percent recorded “46 to 55 years.” The discrepancy in the responses could be due to the fact that some of the participants were not originally from these communities and, as such, did not know the exact period when oil exploration commenced. Actual exploration has been going on for 42 to 43 years.

In an attempt to determine how oil exploration has affected their lives<sup>1</sup>, 74.9 percent stated “negative,” while 25.1 percent recorded “positive to neutral.” In view of the negative impact I saw while in the field, coupled with the narratives and the 74.9 percent above who indicated that oil exploration in the communities has detrimental consequences, I argue that the 25.1 percent who indicated a positive to neutral impact are those who are likely to be contractors to the oil companies and those who are so poor



that it does not matter anymore to them how badly oil exploration activities in their communities affect their lives.

In trying to determine their household experience since oil exploration, 59 percent stated “poor quality of life and shortage of food,” 18.5 percent stated “no economic benefit for the people,” 16.5 percent stated “immorality, violence and the breakdown of law and order (indicating anomie, helplessness, as well as hopelessness),” and 6 percent stated “some economic benefits.” It is quite intriguing that respondents would indicate a state of normlessness when asked about their “household experience” since the beginning of oil exploration in their communities. My explanation for the above responses is that when families lack basic needs/amenities and parents can no longer provide sustenance for members of their household, law and order breaks down, not only within such households but also within the larger community. As in the case of Obagi, wives will prostitute with men in the oil companies in order to provide sustenance for their children while encouraging their daughters to do same. Men in such families have lost control as heads of household and have become redundant in their roles as fathers and husbands.

In an attempt to determine if their access to basic needs has changed, 60.5 percent recorded “Yes” and 39.5 percent recorded “No.” When asked how their access to basic needs have changed, 39.3 percent recorded “irregular power and water supply,” 17 percent stated “poor harvest and shortage of food,” 13.4 percent recorded “poor quality of life” and 30.4 percent stated “some improvement.” Responding to the question of “What is responsible for the change?” 46.2 percent stated, “oil MNCs’ quest for economic profit and oil politics,” 22.6 percent stated, “toxins in the air, land, and

water,” 18.9 percent stated, “little or no (minor) development by government and Oil Company,” and 12.3 percent stated, “lack of concern by the government and Oil Company.” Overall, a majority of the local citizens do not have access to basic needs. There is inadequate food supply as farmlands have been polluted and/or “taken” for oil exploration activities. The citizens do not enjoy a good quality of life as the environment is polluted with toxins from the gas flare as a result of oil exploration activities. In over 40 years of oil exploration in the Niger Delta, the government and oil companies have not provided adequate amenities to cushion the negative impact of oil exploration activities.

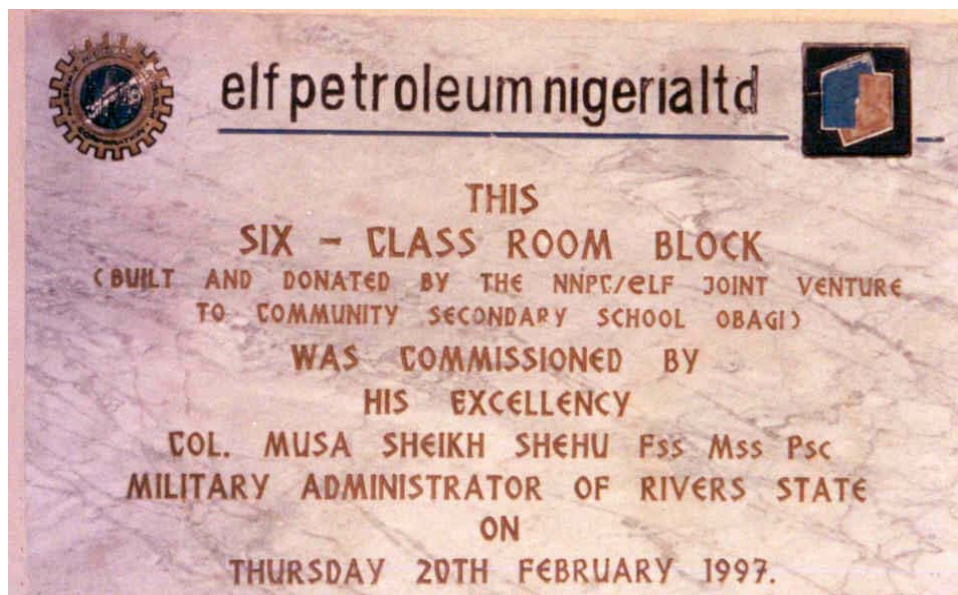
When the question of what is responsible for ethnic tension/conflict was asked, 27 percent stated “Oil politics,” 19.5 percent stated, “struggle over farm land and oil well,” with 8 percent recording “non-fulfillment of agreement by the oil MNCs.” Responding to the question of “how ethnic tension and conflict could be reduced,” 38.9 percent stated “awareness and good public relations as well as complete negotiation before commencement of oil exploration and extraction,” 21.3 percent stated “youth empowerment,” 14.8 percent stated that “attention should be diverted from the oil sector to other economic sectors,” 13.9 percent stated that “there should be adequate and prompt compensation for the whole community” and 11.1 percent stated “contentment and fear of God.” Overall, the responses indicate a general state of lack of militancy, even apathy; possibly, when people are satisfied with whatever they have, no matter how little, they will have no need to struggle/fight to acquire more material things. Also, in my opinion, if people fear God and obey His word, they will not fight with each other over material wealth.

Since these are traditionally farming communities, the respondents were asked if they still farmed, and 69.4 percent said “Yes” while 30.6 percent said “No.” The respondents (30.6 percent) who said “no” were asked “why they were no longer farming” and 42.4 percent said “in search of better job and higher income,” 32.2 percent said because the “land is polluted and no longer fertile,” 25.4 percent said it was because of a “lack of access to farm land.” When asked if there was a decrease in farming/farm production, 95.2 percent said “Yes” and 2.6 percent said

“No.” The respondents who said, “Yes” were further asked to state, “why there was a decrease. 79.6 percent recorded “pollution of the land and environment,” while 19.3 percent said “farming was no longer profitable,” and 1.1 percent recorded “lack of farm capital and assistance.” Some of the respondents with whom I spoke to while in the field indicated that it was no longer beneficial to farm since there was no adequate yield that resulted from the hard manual labour that was put into farm activities.

Respondents were asked about the positive impact that oil exploration has on their lives, and the following were their responses: 30 percent indicated “no positive impact,” 27.5 percent said “positive impact not commensurate with the wealth extracted,” 25 percent said “provision of inefficient amenities and facilities,” and 17.5 percent recorded “development of rural communities.” The picture below shows one of the “white elephant projects<sup>2</sup>” implemented by Elf Oil Company in Obagi. It is a classroom block, but the classrooms are not adequately equipped with seats and other facilities for comfortable teaching and learning activities. Responding to the question on the “negative impact of oil exploration activities,” the following were their responses. 87 percent recorded “toxins in the air, land, and water, acid rain, and gas flaring,” while 10

percent recorded “high rate of immorality including prostitution, drunkenness, and corruption,” and 3 percent said there was “inadequate provision of infrastructure.” To explain intuitively the differences in the responses, I argue that people would normally crave basic necessities of life before they look for infrastructures that would simply add more comfort to their lives<sup>3</sup>. So, these responses are in the order of importance to the local population.

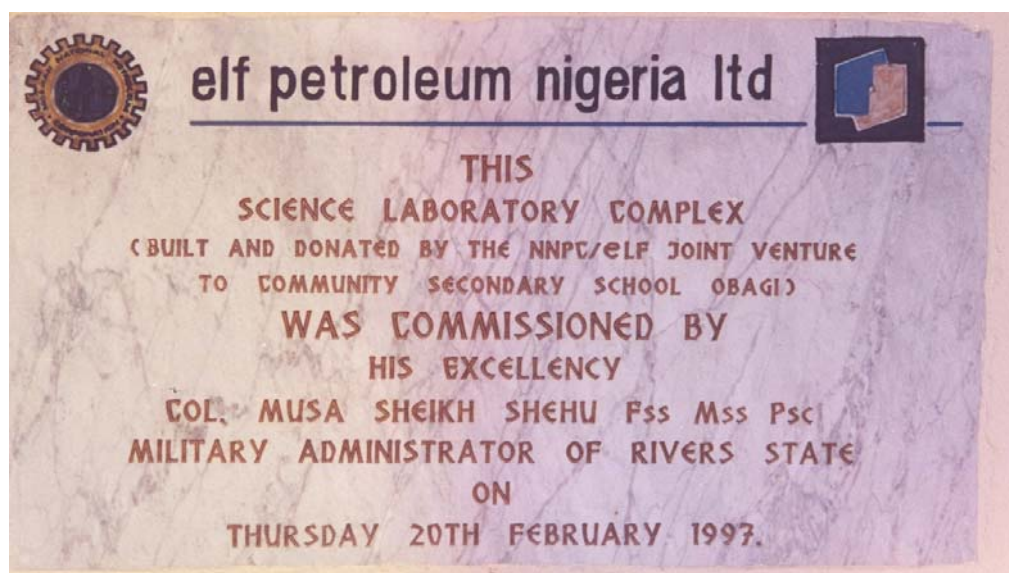


**Picture 1: “White Elephant Project” (Inefficient classrooms in Obagi)**

In order to determine the government’s response to address the negative effect of oil exploration activities, 80 percent said the “government has done nothing in response,” 18.5 percent said the “response is not tangible and most times, it is unfulfilled promises” while 1.5 percent said “sometimes there is dialogue, other times, there is some sort of negotiation and yet other times, one or two of the parties may resort to confrontation.” Confrontation, in the past couple of years has become one of the strategies adopted by some local citizens in order to bring attention to their plight. One other strategy is the

kidnapping of oil workers and the demand for the provision of basic needs and employment in exchange for the kidnapped victims.

On the response of the oil company to the negative impact, 67 percent said, “nothing has been done”, 17 percent said, “white elephant projects, and 16 percent said, “response is not substantial (significant) and sometimes confrontational (the members of the community would have to confront the oil company before anything can be done).” The picture below shows another “white elephant” project for the purpose of “window dressing.” Like all other “white elephant” projects, this project was poorly equipped and not functional, throughout the period that I was in the community.



**Picture 2: “White Elephant Project”(Poorly equipped science laboratory in Obagi high school)**

Asked about “community strategy to cushion the impact on people’s economy,” 43.7 percent said, “at the individual level, local associations, and pressure groups,” 36.8 percent said, “community has no economic strategy,” and 19.5 percent said it is either through “negotiation or confrontation with the government and oil MNC.” As mentioned

earlier, it has become the norm among communities in the Niger Delta region that, without confronting the oil companies and the government, there would be no adequate compensation or the provision of improved amenities and facilities for the communities in which the companies are exploring and extracting crude oil. A further analysis of this phenomenon is done in the cross tabulation section of this chapter in order to explain the differential development and impact in the two communities (Obelle and Obagi) in terms of conflict. Results show that those who confront the government and oil companies are often times listened to and have their requests met.

When asked, “what services have been put in place to minimize the impact of oil exploration on the people,” 87.5 percent said, “no services have been put in place,” 6.5 percent said “some effort by the government and oil company but not tangible,” and 6 percent said, “there have been some efforts by community members and associations.” Asked what community environmental protection strategy they had, 93.5 percent said “no strategies have been put in place,” 3.5 percent stated that there are “monitoring and liaison committees” such as the Community Development Committee (CDC), and 3.0 percent stated that the community members protect themselves at “individual level by covering their water wells and using fertilizers in their farms.” Responding to the question of the government’s response to improve the quality of their lives, 81 percent stated “provision of insufficient and non-functional facilities and committees” such as the CDC mentioned above, while 18.5 percent said the “government has done nothing to improve their quality of life.” The following are the responses to the question on oil MNC’s response to the improvement of the quality of life: 39.4 percent said “provision of some sort of amenities/facilities and jobs”, 36.4 percent said, “response is not

commensurate with damage done to their land and means of livelihood,” while 24.2 percent said “oil MNCs have done nothing in response.” The government and oil companies have not provided any tangible facilities for these communities. For example, below is another “white elephant” project in Obelle implemented by Shell Oil Company. This project was intended to supply good quality water to the local citizens but it has never been in operation since its inception. Some of the respondents from the in-depth interview indicated that it was characteristic of the government and oil companies to provide inefficient amenities for the communities.



**Picture 3: “White Elephant” Project (Inefficient Solar Water Source in Obelle)**

When asked to make suggestions in view of the responses from the government and oil companies, 48 percent said “oil company (ies) and the government should provide basic amenities and adequately compensate host-communities,” 27 percent said “government should do more to address the situation in the Niger Delta region” such as make policies and laws that would protect the people’s basic human rights and welfare in view of the detrimental consequences of oil exploration, and 25 percent said “oil

companies should fulfill agreements as well as re-negotiate terms of operation with host communities.” Speaking with the respondents from the in-depth interviews, I realized that re-negotiation is based on the premise that previous agreements were signed without the community members being aware of the ramifications of the impact or without being told everything that was involved; in other words, they were lied to in order to sign such agreements.

### **5.3 Cross-Tabulation Analysis**

In this section, I analyze the association of the impact of oil MNCs’ activities with the following variables: age, gender, ethnic group, economic background, family size, education, and marital status. For some of the relationships I used three-variable contingency tables to elaborate the relationships under study. For example, I chose to control for “gender” while doing a cross-tabulation for age group and the impact of oil MNCs’ activities. Controlling for “gender” enables me to explain the differential impact on the different age categories of men and women. I did another cross-tabulation with age group by the impact of oil MNCs’ activities controlling for marital status. Here, the differential impact of oil exploration on single and married respondents is compared within the different age categories. That is, using cross-tabulation, I analyzed the impact of oil exploration on younger married people and older married people. I also did a cross-tabulation of how the activities of oil MNCs are influenced by “gender” in Obelle and Obagi communities. Finally, I controlled for “gender” while doing a cross tabulation of oil impact by educational qualification. The aim here is to determine if educational qualification influences how individuals are impacted by the activities of the oil MNCs within categories of gender.



Table Two describes the relationship between age and the impact of oil MNCs.

**Table 2: The Impact of Age on Attitudes Toward Oil MNCs' Activities:**

How oil has affected life	<u>Age group</u>			
	Under 29	30 to 39	Over 39	Total
Negative	42 (62.7%)	59 (77.6%)	39 (88.6%)	140 (74.9%)
Positive	25 (37.3%)	17 (22.4%)	5 (11.4%)	47 (25.1%)
Total (N)	67	76	44	187

$$\chi^2 = 10.025$$

$$p = .007$$

Table Two shows differences in responses regarding oil MNCs' activities across age categories for the Niger Delta region. The difference ranges from 62.7 percent (for age group under 29), to 77.6 percent (for age group 30 to 39) and 88.6 percent (for age group over 39), indicating an overall negative impact of oil exploration activities, which increases by age. For the same age groups as above, the positive impact ranges from 11.4 percent (for age group over 39) to 22.4 percent (for age group 30 to 39) and 37.3 percent (for age group under 29).

The chi square value shows a statistical significance of .007, indicating a significant association between age and impact of oil MNCs' activities. The age group that feels the most negative impact is the group over 39 years of age, with an 88.6 percent negative response. Negative evaluations are most prominent for the eldest respondents.

Explaining this relationship, I posit that people who are over 39 years of age in these communities are regarded as mature adults with family and community responsibilities. Sociologically, coming of age comes with societal expectations such as starting a family, having a job, and contributing to the community, among other responsibilities. Thus, there is much pressure on older respondents to take care of their families and provide the basic necessities of life for them, as well as contribute time and money to their community. In the absence of necessities or provisions, such as holding a job and having some income, older individuals certainly feel the negative impact the most; there has always been an expectation, albeit unwritten, that the presence of any multinational corporation in a developing country would help alleviate the suffering of the masses by providing jobs which would in turn provide the people with the money to meet their basic needs. On the other hand, the younger age group members (under 29, 62.7 percent negative) do not have enormous family or community responsibilities and can afford to look after themselves. Culturally, people in this age group are still under the care of their parents and older siblings or other extended family members. Despite the cultural interpretation, the percentage of the negative impact for this age category is still high. Consequently, my interpretation is that when the older age group members are unable to fulfill their family and community responsibilities, it also impacts on the younger generation in various ways. For example, citizens cannot afford a decent standard of living and education because there are no funds to pay their education bills, among others.

Table Three shows the differences between the categories in the variable “gender” in relationship to the impact of oil exploration.

**Table 3: The Impact of Gender on Attitudes Toward Oil MNCs' Activities:**

<u>Gender</u>			
How oil has affected life	Male	Female	Total
Negative	72 (75.8%)	68 (73.9%)	140 (74.9%)
Positive	23 (24.2%)	24 (26.1%)	47 (25.1%)
Total (N)	95	92	187

$$\chi^2 = .087$$

$$p = .767$$

From Table Three, the differences in the percentage of the negative impact range from 73.9 percent for women to 75.8 percent for men. The negative impact substantially outweighs the positive impact for both men and women.

The slight differences between the categories here were not expected. From the beginning of this study, I had expected to see a significant difference in the impact of oil exploration between men and women, but this is not the case. A common sense explanation could be that, although women in this region were economically independent and had political clout prior to colonialism, in contemporary Nigerian culture, men are considered the breadwinners of families while women play a supporting role (except for female headed households). Consequently, both males and females, as members of a collective family unit, feel the negative consequences of oil exploration activities that make them unable to provide for their families.

Table Four shows the relationship between the categories of ethnic group and the impact of oil exploration activities.

**Table 4: The Impact of Ethnic Group on Attitudes Toward Oil MNCs' Activities:**

Ethnic Group

How oil has affected life	Ikwerre (Obelle)	Ogba (Obagi)	Total
Negative	86 (94.5%)	53 (55.8%)	139 (74.9%)
Positive	5 (5.5%)	42 (44.2%)	47 (25.3%)
Total (N)	95	92	187

$$\chi^2 = 36.893$$

$$p = .000$$

The negative effect varies from 55.8 percent (for Obagi) to 94.5 percent (for Obelle) while the positive effect varies from 5.5 percent (for Obelle) to 44.2 percent (for Ogba/Egi). The percentage differences show a strong, significant association at .000. Overall, ethnicity determines how negatively or positively one feels the impact of the activities of oil MNCs in the Niger Delta region. With a 94.5 percent negative impact for Obelle community of the Ikwerre ethnic group and 55.8 percent for Obagi community of the Ogba/Egi ethnic group, the two ethnic groups are impacted differently. I posit here that this difference is in part due to the cultural and historical differences between the two ethnic groups. The Ikwerre (Obelle) ethnic group is known for its peace-loving nature and hard work regardless of whether there is a pay-off from the work or not. On

the other hand, the Ogba/Egi (Obagi) ethnic group is assertive and bold, confronting the oil MNCs and the Nigerian government when they deem necessary and demanding their rights, particularly in the provision of basic needs and jobs/contracts related to the negative impact of oil exploration activities in their communities. A detail of this analysis is in Chapter 6 where I used the narrative from Interviewee Number 22 to illustrate the reason behind the differential impact of oil exploration on the two ethnic groups.

Table Five presents the association between income and oil MNCs' impact.

**Table 5: The Impact of Economic Background on Attitudes Toward Oil MNCs' Activities on:**

Personal Income<sup>4</sup>

How oil has affected life	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Total
Negative	63 (68.5%)	33 (91.7%)	10 (76.9%)	106 (75.2%)
Positive	29 (31.5%)	3 (8.3%)	3 (23.1%)	35 (24.8%)
Total (N)	92	36	13	141

$$\chi^2 = 7.479$$

$$p = .024$$

The variable "personal income" is used to indicate the socio-economic class of the participants and was recoded (using estimates of participants' personal income) into the following categories, "very poor", "poor", and "average." The percentages of those negatively impacted by the activities of oil MNCs ranges from 68.5 percent for the very poor to 76.9 percent for the average with 91.7 percent for the poor. On the other hand, the percentages of those positively impacted are as follows; 8.3 percent for the poor, 23.1 percent for those with an average income, and 31.5 percent for the very poor. The

discrepancy in the responses across class categories – especially the most positive evaluation by the very poor – could be that very poor people tend to be non-political and do not watch the news. The working poor on the other hand are more knowledgeable about their plight as they have access to media sources. Also, the very poor may have a desperate hope for a better future while the poor are more realistic that a better future is unlikely for them.

The chi-square for the relationship between socio-economic background and the impact of oil MNCs activities in the Niger Delta region is significant at .024. Consequently, one's social class is correlated with how much one would be negatively impacted by the activities of oil MNCs in the Niger Delta region.

Table Six shows the association between the number of children participants had at home and the impact of oil MNCs.

**Table 6: The Impact of Family Size on Attitudes Toward oil MNCs' Activities:**

Children at Home

How oil has affected life	None	1 to 5	6 and above	Total
Negative	58 (67.4%)	66 (77.6%)	16 (100.0%)	14 (74.9%)
Positive	28 (32.6%)	19 (22.4%)	0 (0%)	47 (25.1%)
Total (N)	86	85	16	187

$$\chi^2 = 8.240$$

$$p = .016$$

This variable (number of children still living at home) was collapsed and recoded to “children at home” with the following categories: none, 1 to 5, and 6 and above. The

relationship is significant at .05 level, with a statistical significant value of .016. The higher the number of children one has, the more negative the respondent feels about the activities of oil exploration. On the other hand, having fewer or no children generated a more positive response. Respondents who had more children had a strong concern for the future well being of their offspring since they lacked the resources to provide adequate basic necessities and education for the children.

Table Seven shows the association between education and the impact of oil MNCs.

**Table 7: The Impact of Education on Attitudes Toward Oil MNCs' Activities:**

Highest Education

How oil has affected life	High School/under	Diploma/Vocation	Undergrad/graduate school	Post graduate	
Negative	4 (57.1%)	77 (77.0%)	41 (71.9%)	16 (80.0%)	138 (75.0%)
Positive	3 (42.9%)	23 (23.0%)	16 (28.1%)	4 (20.0%)	46 (25.0%)
Total (N)	7	100	57	20	184

$$\chi^2 = 1.957$$

$$p = .581$$

The statistical significance of .581 indicates a non-significant relationship between the variables “oil impact” (dependent variable) and highest educational qualification (independent variable). However, there are some trends from the table that are interesting. The responses and their percentages ranged from 57.1 percent for people with a high school diploma or less to 80.0 percent for respondents with postgraduate degrees. The trend is that more educated people feel more negatively about the activities

of oil exploration in Obelle and Obagi. With more education, one would expect to find a job that pays a high salary and, ultimately, have a good quality of life with an improved socio-economic status. Since this is not the case, the activities of oil MNCs are perceived negatively by the highly educated since there are factors embedded in the processes of oil exploration (oil politics) that make it difficult for such people to find the employment they deserve and the quality of life they want. Historically, people with high education have been perceived with suspicion<sup>5</sup> and this could explain why, with all the educated people in Obelle, none are employed by Shell in any capacity, while in Obagi, women with post secondary diplomas or degrees are employed as “tea girls,” serving tea/coffee and running errands for the management personnel in the Obagi oil location offices.

Table Eight shows the relationship between the categories of marital status and the impact of oil exploration activities. Marital status, which is the independent variable in this analysis, was recoded and collapsed from categories such as single, married/cohabiting, separated, divorced, and widowed, to two categories, single and married.



**Table 8: The Impact of Marital Status on Attitudes Toward Oil MNCs' Activities:**

Marital Status

How oil has affected life	Single	Married	
Negative	52 (63.4%)	88 (83.8%)	140 (74.9%)
Positive	30 (36.6%)	17 (16.2%)	47 (25.1%)
Total (N)	8	105	187

$$\chi^2 = 10.178$$

$$p = .001$$

The above table shows differences across categories of the independent variable. There is a significant association between the dependent variable (oil impact) and the independent variable (marital status) at .001. For married respondents, 83.8 percent indicated that the activities of oil MNCs impacted them negatively while 63.4 percent of the single respondents were also negatively impacted. On the other hand, married respondents recorded 16.2 percent of the positive impact of oil exploration in their community, while 36.6 percent of single respondents recorded a positive impact. It may be that with marriage comes more family and societal responsibilities, and not having a job/income reflects feelings of familial inadequacy or family impotence.

#### **5.4 Analysis of Controlling Variables**

To elaborate further on some of the previous relationships, I chose to control for “sex,” by running cross-tabulation for age group as the independent variable and “oil impact” as the dependent variable. Also controlling for “marital status,” I ran a cross-

tabulation for age group, as the independent variable and ‘oil impact’ as the dependent variable. Furthermore, controlling for “ethnic group” I ran a cross-tabulation for “oil impact” as the dependent variable and “sex” as the independent variable. In addition, I controlled for “sex” while running a cross-tabulation for education as the independent variable and “oil impact” as the dependent variable. The following are the resulting cross-tabulations and analyses. In these analyses, I chose to look at the percentages across the categories of the given variable where the sample size is small, because using the statistical significance alone would not give a complete picture of the relationship between the variables.

**Table 9: The Impact of Age Group Controlling for Gender on Attitudes Toward Oil MNCs’ Activities:**

	<u>Gender</u>					
	Male			Female		
How oil affects life	Under 29	30 to 39	Over 39	Under 29	30 to 39	Over 39
Negative	12 (52.2%)	35 (79.5%)	25 (89.3%)	30 (68.2%)	24 (75.0%)	14 (87.5%)
Positive	11 (47.8%)	9 (20.5%)	3 (10.7%)	14 (31.8%)	8 (25.0%)	2 (12.5%)
Total (N)	23	44	28	44	32	16

Statistical significance: .006 (male) .316 (females)

Previously, two cross-tabulations were done for “oil impact” by “gender” and “oil impact” by “age group.” In the cross-tabulation for “oil impact” by “gender”, the statistical significance was .767, indicative of no association. The percentages ranged from 73.9 percent of females who were negatively impacted by the activities of oil

MNCs in the Niger Delta to 75.8 percent of males who were negatively impacted. The statistical significance for age group by oil impact was .007 indicating a strong association between the variables.

However, in controlling for gender, results show that the world works in different ways for men and women. The statistical significance for males was .006 while that for females was .316. This shows that the association between oil impact and age is significant for males but not for females. Specifically, older males are more negatively impacted by the activities of oil MNCs in the Niger Delta than younger males.

Interpreting the range in percentage, Table Nine shows a range from 52.2 percent for males under 29 to 89.3 percent for males over 39 compared to the females' range from 68.2 percent to 87.5 percent. At age over 39, males are regarded as mature adults with more family and societal responsibilities and the inadequacies they experience in fulfilling these obligations impact on them negatively. On the other hand, women at this age are normally expected to get married, and perform the role of a mother and wife, only supporting their husbands as a co-breadwinners and not sole breadwinners for the family. Most women in these communities look up to their husbands for assistance in performing their societal obligations, and this could explain the differential impact.

Men, in post-colonial Nigeria are regarded as the breadwinners of the household. Therefore, any situation that prevents them from fulfilling this role is perceived negatively, especially as they get older. But the age effect is not as apparent for females. Although this region of Nigeria had egalitarian gender relations before the advent of colonialism, it was replaced by patriarchal trends during the colonial era, which is still being perpetuated in contemporary Nigerian society where men are looked upon as

heads of households. The role of a head of a household comes with the responsibilities of providing food, shelter and clothing for the members of the family. Sociologically, males and females share different life experiences and are socialized to act differently and expect different things, given the same situation. Consequently, though both males and females are negatively impacted by the activities of oil MNCs, the degree and interpretation of the impact is different for both sexes.

**Table 10: Impact of Age Group Controlling for Marital Status on Attitudes Toward Oil MNCs' Activities:**

Marital status

How oil affects life	Single			Married		
	Under 29	30 to 39	Over 39	Under 29	30 to 39	Over 39
Negative	34 (64.2%)	15 (57.7%)	3 (100.0%)	8 (57.1%)	44 (88.0%)	36 (87.8%)
Positive	19 (35.8%)	11 (42.3%)	0 (0%)	6 (42.9%)	6 (12.0%)	5 (12.2%)
Total (N)	53	26	3	14	50	41

Statistical significance: .348 (single) .015 (married)

I ran cross-tabulations for age and marital status by impact of oil activities before controlling for marital status. In the cross-tabulation for age by impact of oil activities, the statistical significance of the relationship was .007. The percentages ranged from 62.7 percent for the under 29 years of age category who had a negative impact to 88.6 percent of over 39 year old respondents who were negatively impacted by the activities of oil MNCs in the Niger Delta. The statistical significance for the impact of oil MNCs'

activities by marital status was .001. This is a stronger association compared with that of age group by impact of oil activities.

However, in controlling for marital status, I uncovered that the age-impact relationship differs depending on marital status. The significant value for “single” is .348, while the married respondents had a statistical significant value of .015. The association between the impact of oil exploration activities in the Niger Delta is quite different for the two categories. The association is significant for married respondents while non-significant for the singles. Married people have more family and societal obligations; as married people grow older, their obligations are more important to them and the negative effects of oil exploration become more acute as compared to their non-married counterparts.

**Table 11: Impact of Gender Controlling for Ethnic Group on Attitudes Toward Oil MNCs’ Activities:**

How oil affects life	<u>Ethnic Group</u>			
	Ikwerre (Obelle)		Ogba/Egi (Obagi)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Negative	46 (95.8%)	40 (93.0%)	26 (55.3%)	27 (56.3%)
Positive	2 (4.2%)	3 (7.0%)	21 (44.7%)	21 (43.8%)
Total (N)	48	43	47	48

Statistical significance: .447 (Obelle) .546 (Obagi)

Table Eleven is a cross-tabulation for “oil impact” by “gender” controlling for ethnic group. In the previous cross-tabulation ran for “oil impact” by ethnic group, the

statistical significant value of the relationship was .000 indicating a very strong relationship between ethnicity and the impact of oil exploration activities. In the cross-tabulation for “oil impact” by “gender”, the statistical significant value was .767 indicating no relationship between the variables. It does not matter whether one is male or female; both genders are negatively affected by the activities of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region.

From Table eleven, there is no relationship between the variables with a statistical significant value of .447 for Obelle and .546 for Obagi. However, there are some noticeable trends when looking at the percentages across the categories. As shown previously, respondents from Obelle are more negatively impacted upon when compared to those from Obagi. 95.8 percent of men and 93.0 percent of women from Obelle reported a negative impact of oil exploration activities while 55.3 percent of men and 56.3% percent of women from Obagi reported a negative impact. In addition, there is only a very slight difference between the men and women from both groups indicating that, irrespective of gender, the local people are negatively impacted. Among Obelle people, there is a strong belief that the man is the head of the household and must provide for his family and the inability to fulfill this role is negatively perceived in the community and the man is seen as a failure. On the other hand, men in Obagi are very agitated and assertive in their quest for a better life and improvement of their economic situation in the face of the negative effect of oil exploration. More men than women hold high positions in the youth associations/clubs, which gives them access to oil jobs and contracts. Historically, Obagi women have been known to physically confront the oil MNCs in their communities, while this is not the case with Obelle women who are

content to pick up from where the government stops and only seek peaceful means to bring about a change in their economic situation.

In analyzing the differential impact on the two communities, the Obelle in Ikwerre land are more negatively impacted because, culturally, they are a peace-loving ethnic group, not given to confrontation. However, over the years, particularly in the last decade, confrontation has become the norm if a given community wishes to be heard by the government and/or oil company or if they hope to have their demands met. The Obagi in Egi land, on the other hand, are historically assertive and confrontational; also, there are more oil wells in this community compared to Obelle (Ikwerre). Having more oil wells also means more presence of the oil MNCs and their workers, who are not restricted to certain living quarters but live among the local population. With fewer oil wells in Obelle, the workers are more restricted to the oil location and usually do not live among the local people.

**Table 12: Impact of Education Controlling for Gender on Attitudes Toward Oil MNCs' Activities:**

Gender

How oil affects life	Male		Female		
	Diploma/less	Graduate/more	Diploma/less	Graduate/more	
Negative	34 (77.3%)	38 (74.5%)	47 (74.6%)	19 (73.1%)	46
Positive	10 (22.7%)	13 (25.5%)	16 (25.4%)	7 (26.9%)	138
Total (N)	44	51	63	26	184

Statistical significance: .472 (males) .539 (females)

Table Twelve shows no significant difference in the relationship, oil impact by education, controlling for gender with a significance of .472 for males and .539 for females. The percentages in the table also indicate that education does not influence how men and women are impacted by the activities of oil exploration.

## **5.5 Summary of Findings**

The different parameters employed in the quantitative data have been analyzed in this Chapter. These variables served as parameters for determining if and how the uneven application of the regulatory standards in oil exploration affects the lives of the people in Obelle and Obagi communities. The variables included gender, age, education, social class, and ethnicity. The following findings were revealed from the quantitative analysis of the data:

**Effect of Oil Exploration:** The uneven application of regulatory standards in oil exploration has detrimental consequences for the local people, illustrated by the 74.9 percent negative responses versus 25.1 percent positive responses to the impact of oil exploration.

**Gender and Education:** Irrespective of gender and educational qualification, indigenes of these communities indicated being negatively affected by the activities of oil MNCs. Further analysis of the data revealed however, that there is no association between gender and the impact of oil exploration activities with a statistical significant value of .767. Also, the findings showed no association between educational qualification and the negative effect of oil exploration with a statistical significant value of .581. In terms of the degree of the negative impact, 73.9 percent of women and 75.8 percent of men felt



negatively impacted while the effect for those with education ranged from 57.1 percent for those with high school or less to 80.0 percent for those with postgraduate education.

**Age and Marital Status:** At a statistical significant value of .007, there is an association between age and the effect of oil exploration activities. Older people were found to be the most impacted with 88.6 percent indicating a negative response. This situation is compounded when the older people are married with children. For example, with a statistical significant value of .001, married people feel more negatively affected by the activities of oil exploration and with a statistical significant value of .016, the higher the number of children one has, the more negatively one would feel about the effect of oil exploration.

**Social Class:** Social class was found to be correlated with how much respondents felt the negative effect of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region at a statistical significant value of .024.

**Ethnicity:** With 94.5 percent negative effect for Obelle (Ikwerre ethnic group) and 55.8 percent for Obagi (Ogba/Egi ethnic group), ethnicity was shown to determine the level of impact of oil exploration on the respondents. Moreover, ethnicity combined with geographic location in determining how negatively people felt about the effect of oil exploration activities in the region.

## **5.6 Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study as highlighted above are corroborate the argument in the existing literature that the presence or relocation of MNCs to developing countries does

not necessarily bring about socio-economic improvement to the local population (Apter, 1998). Instead, it brings with it negative consequences for the local people (Saro-Wiwa, 1992). An example is the government's bid to privatize its agencies in order to create more jobs, strengthen economic growth, and encourage efficient use of resources. The Nigerian government promulgated land decrees that has instead, alienated men and women from their farmlands, consequently depriving them of the ability to provide for their families, because they had no fertile lands or jobs. Without the resources to meet their needs the local people's socio-economic situation has gradually worsened, especially as they became burdened with family and societal responsibilities.

According to advocates of globalization, the processes of globalization are geared toward economic development and emancipation of people from poverty (Nalini et al 1997: 69-70). This position depicts a progressive expansion of individual choice, elimination of life-threatening diseases, prolonged life expectancy, as well as socio-economic growth. Although the findings (according to perceptions of respondents) of this study show some positive impact, having 73.9 percent of women and 75.8 percent of men indicate being negatively affected by in the activities of the oil MNCs the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, illustrates that global capital does not always have the purported positive effect. Saro-Wiwa (1992) noted that, on the contrary, the relocation of MNCs to countries of the South, particularly Nigeria, has had detrimental consequences for the local people and has neither provided them with new economic opportunities nor with other progressive opportunities. Instead, the process of globalization that enabled the relocation of MNCs to countries of the South has undermined the culture of the affected people (Kabeer, 1994: 47).

As found from the data analysis, no one is exempt from the pathologies of the globalization phenomenon, particularly in regard to the uneven application of the regulatory standards in oil exploration. Irrespective of gender and age, the majority of the people bear the brunt of the negative consequences of oil exploration. However, Brisibe (2001: 1) has shown that in the Niger Delta, atrocities are committed against the people, particularly women and young girls; a prime example is the rape of young girls and women by Nigerian soldiers in 1999 in Yenagoa and Choba for demanding the stoppage of military brutality in their communities.<sup>6</sup> Also, there is a continuing harassment of local people in the Niger Delta communities by Nigerian soldiers serving as guards at the locations of the oil companies. Of particular importance are the violent physical acts against women that include rape and sexual assaults (Brisibe, 2001). These acts are physically dehumanizing and impact the women psychologically. These incidences of violence erode the essence of womanhood and inhibit women from performing their roles as wives and mothers.

This study's findings show that, while it is widely believed that confrontation is the major means through which the communities' needs/requests are met, communities in the Niger Delta region differed on their willingness to confront the oil companies or the government. The level of development in the various communities reflects the level of confrontation. In the case of Obagi, there are more signs of development compared to Obelle. In Obelle, there are local youth and women's associations that work toward improving the socio-economic situation of the people. The youth association in Obelle was not very active and assertive in its demands, choosing instead to stage peaceful protests against the MNCs in their community. On the other hand, the local youth and

women's associations in Obagi were all very active and collaborative with one another in protest marches and demonstrations, confronting the government and the oil companies as the need arose.

Although the respondents in this study insist that the gains of confronting the government and oil companies outweigh the losses, Brisibe (2001: 1-2) shows that in confrontation, local people usually lose lives and property. For example, the 2001 riot in Obagi, which claimed a woman's life, resulted in more indigenes being awarded contracts; indeed, at the time of the field research for this study, a contract on the construction of a network of intra-community roads was in progress in Obagi, as shown in pictures four and five below.

It is worth noting here that this confrontation is not restricted to the oil companies and government, as communities and families confront each other over the ownership of land where oil wells are located. Such confrontations/ethnic conflicts often yield similar results as the confrontations with the oil companies. There is often a re-negotiation of boundaries whereby, community/family "A" or "B" benefits by getting a share of the royalties from the oil companies. Sometimes, community/family "A" or "B" may lose in the renegotiations although according to some of the respondents from the in-depth interviews, the objective of the dialogue is to create a win – win situation for all communities and families involved.



**Picture 4: Men and Equipment on Intra-community Road Construction in Obagi**



**Picture 5: Construction of Intra-Community Road Network in Obagi**

In order to explore the findings of the quantitative data in-depth, context-bound information had to be sought from participants, through personal contact with me, the researcher. Also, since this research is a product of multiple realities filtered through each participant, the survey method did not provide much opportunity to observe, interact with participants, and interrogate their subjective experiences of the

phenomenon under study. As a result, in-depth, face-to-face interviews were employed, in view of Creswell's (1994) claim that individuals construct their reality, from both subjective and multiple perspectives. The next chapter, which is primarily focused on women, will discuss in detail some issues raised during the interviews with key community informants. It will also present women's experiences of the impact of oil exploration in their communities in their own voices.

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- <sup>1</sup> The following are the responses from the participants who responded to the survey question “how has oil exploration affected your life”: 64.6 percent (N=122) responded that they have been “badly/negatively” affected, 4.2 percent (N=8) stated that they feel an impact through the toxic pollution of the environment, 1.6 percent (N=3) responded that they have been impacted by the “poor quality of life/health” in their community, 3.7 percent (N=7) stated that the impact is in the “set back in agricultural production,” 9.0 percent (N=17) stated that they have been “both positively and negatively” impacted, 15.9 percent stated that the impact has been “fairly positive,” and the remaining 1.1 percent (N=2) gave a neutral response. These responses were collapsed into two categories, “negative” and “positive” for statistical purposes.
- <sup>2</sup> “White elephant” projects are usually erected or established purely for political reasons and, for the most part, are inefficient. The local community/recipients of such projects are not usually consulted and, consequently, the projects are rarely tailored to fit their needs and, as such, become redundant and seen by the people as a piece of furnishing, decorating their community, hence the term “white elephant.”
- <sup>3</sup> Maslow (1943) gave an analysis of a hierarchy of needs. At the top of the hierarchy is “self actualization” need, followed by “self esteem,” “social need – love and belonging,” “safety and security,” and physical survival needs.” Maslow classified the lower four levels of needs as “deficiency needs, which he associated with physiological needs. The top-most need he classified as growth need, which is associated with psychological needs. The basic concept in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is that the higher needs only come into focus when all the needs that are lower down in the hierarchy are mainly or entirely satisfied. Therefore, as humans meet “basic needs,” they seek to satisfy successively “higher needs” on the hierarchy of needs. It could also be argued that, when some of the physical needs are unmet, a human’s physiological needs will take the highest priority in that person’s life. Consequently, as result of the force of physiological needs, an individual will deprioritize all other desires and capacities. A lack of/unmet physiological needs can control thoughts and behaviour and can cause people to feel sickness, pain, and discomfort. This is the basis for my explanation of the responses from Obelle and Obagi to the question on the “negative impact of oil exploration activities.” See also, Maslow (1970).
- <sup>4</sup> Within the working class, there are different categories of income that impact on the quality of life. Also note that, it is within the working class that the categories “Very Poor,” “Poor,” and “Average” are defined.
- <sup>5</sup> In the specific case of Nigeria during the colonial period when the colonial administrator, Hugh Clifford (Lugard’s immediate successor from 1919 to 1925) argued for the division of Nigeria into two separate colonies, A. J. Harding, who was the director of Nigerian affairs at the colonial office did not support this idea and observed that “as wealth and education increased, so did political discontent and sedition. This argument was made in order to dissuade Clifford from separating the southern protectorate from the north and making it an entity by itself since there were more educated elites in the south than in the north who would question the processes of colonialism.
- <sup>6</sup> The Nigerian government has put the military at the disposal of the oil MNCs such that whenever there is a protest or demonstration by the host communities against the negative consequences of oil exploration, the military will come to the oil MNCs’ aid by repressing and brutalizing the local people. Most of these brutalities and atrocities are committed against women and children.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **QUALITATIVE DATA AND ANALYSIS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the presentation and description of my in-depth interview data from Obelle and Obagi communities followed by analyses of participants' responses/narratives based on different sections/sub-headings. This format of discussion has been influenced by the order in which the interview questions appeared and were asked. Accordingly, I have used participants' responses in the context of the theme on violence and brutality. I have also used Atlas. ti 5.0 qualitative analysis software, which is effective in the analysis of relationships between variables in the body of a given text, to analyze the consequences of oil exploration in Obagi and Obelle communities.

Section 6.2 is focused on participants' assessment of their perceived effect of oil exploration and extraction on the quality of their lives and section 6.3 is centred on the impact of the activities of oil exploration on the people's culture. Section 6.4 is concerned with participants' narratives on ethnic tension and conflict in their communities. Section 6.5 deals with the participants' assessment of the effect of oil exploration on their agricultural production. Section 6.6 focuses on the participants' general narratives of their perceived impact of oil exploration and extraction on their environment and economic self-sufficiency of the local population and section 6.7 is



focused on the theme of violence and brutality that came out of the interviews/interviewees' responses. Section 6.8, uses Atlas.ti 5.0 qualitative analysis software (as highlighted in Chapter 4, section 4.5) to show the relationships between the different variables in the study and, section 6.9 provides a discussion of results.

## **6.2 The Effect of Oil Exploration and Extraction on Quality of Life**

The analysis of the impact of oil exploration and extraction on the quality of life is informed by respondents' answers to a set of exploratory questions posed to them during my in-depth interview sessions. The questions include the following:

1. Are the participants aware of oil exploration and extraction in their communities?
2. If the answer to the above question is yes, how long has this activity been going on?
3. What were some of the participants' household economic experiences before and after the commencement of oil exploration in their communities?
4. Has the participants' access to basic needs since the commencement of oil exploration in their communities changed?
5. If yes, how has this access changed?
6. What do you think is responsible for the changes?

These questions grouped together helped to answer the question on the nature and impact of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The following is a discussion of the participants' stories based on the recorded interviews with the women and community leaders.

The respondents confirmed that, over the past 40 years, oil exploration and extraction has been going on in their communities and recalled their household economic experiences before oil exploration with nostalgia; at the same time they

reiterated the fact that it could not be compared to the suffering they were currently undergoing as a result of oil exploration. As Interviewee Number 6 stated:

The only thing the oil exploration has done is that it has a very bad effect on us. We have not been gaining anything. Even in jobs, only few people that are gaining. In this community, the crops were doing very well. I could remember that cassava stem we were using that time, we call it *worgu*. When you plant this *worgu*, it produces very big cassava tubers. Then after some time, the whole thing no longer produces again. Before you could get a cassava stem that will at least bring a little thing that will carry you in life, you would have suffered. Even vegetable, I know if I planted vegetable throughout the season of vegetable, we eat vegetable a lot but you can find out that vegetable no longer produce at all. Hardly in this community will you not see enough vegetable to buy. But now-a-days all those things are no longer producing well. So many of our waters are polluted. You see so many people now complaining of stomach pain, and typhoid fever all around; it is because of the pollution of water. You know that when this gas is being flared all the toxin enters the air and enter into our well water. The water is no longer good for human consumption. The land is also affected. You know the smoke in the air, when rain falls, it brings it down on the land and this affects the crops. Even the air we breathe is all polluted because of this gas flaring.

In analyzing the perceived impact of oil exploration on the quality of life, the preceding narrative from confirms some of the issues found in the literature. For example, Manby (1999: 5) noted,

While the people of the Niger Delta have faced the adverse effects of oil extraction, they have in general also failed to gain from the oil wealth. ...Despite the vast wealth produced from the oil found under the delta, the region remains poorer than the national average; and although in the north of Nigeria poverty is more extreme, the divisions between rich and poor are more obvious in the areas where gas flares light up the night sky.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout my stay in Obelle and Obagi communities, I observed that there was no electricity and no light at night except for the gas flare that lighted the night sky, and it was so hot that we slept with doors and windows open through the night. It has been documented that water-related diseases are widespread and probably the “central health problem in the Niger Delta,” which ultimately impact on the quality of life in the region

(World Bank, 2000: 71). The health hazards from the contaminated water were openly discussed by some of the people I interviewed.

The other major problem is lack of adequate employment opportunities. The reality for the Niger Delta indigenes is that, “the oil sector employs only a small percentage of the work-force, creating a labour aristocracy of high wages surrounded by a great mass of unemployed” (Manby, 1999: 60) and/or underemployed. Unemployment and underemployment impact negatively on the household economy since an inadequate income cannot take care of household needs.

Corroborating Manby (1999), respondent Number 21 stated:

There were bumper harvests in those days. If you look at our farmlands, they looked lush, radiant and whatever you put there you will get many. This problem of pollution was not there but now I tell you we cannot sleep at night. There are incidents of high temperature, cholera as a result of emission of dangerous gasses into the atmosphere, water born diseases like cholera. You can also see the nature of our zinc...*this is the roofing sheet used for their houses*. We were very close to the nature. Now they have destroyed our fauna and you know flora and fauna that is both trees and animals. The young children don't know these things again. But when I was young, I knew porcupine, rabbit, antelope, and many animals. There was also a pond we inherited from our forefathers but if you go there now you will not see all those things again. The whole thing has been destroyed. The oil activities have prevented my people from carrying out their daily lives like working on the farm and hunting for game. All the species of animals and insects has been destroyed because of the gas flaring which occurs every day. During the rainy season, our people cannot drink from the rain because of what is washed down with the water from the roof. After rain, you will see heavy residue and this is as a result of the gas flaring. They don't employ our people in good positions except to make a few of them security guards at their location.

With regard to employment of the local population in the oil sector, Brisibe (2001: 6) noted that the majority of the youths from the region are unemployed. “They do not benefit from the presence of the MNCs operating in their communities and, less than 5 percent of the people from the Niger Delta work in these companies; women from the

region working in the MNCs are less than one percent. A majority of the beneficiaries are from other parts of Nigeria.” This situation is true for Obelle community where I observed that none of the indigenes work with Shell at the managerial level; only a few men are employed at the menial labour level as security guards at the flow station. The situation was also similar at Obagi. From speaking with some of the community members none of the indigenes was employed at the flow station, except for one woman who had a diploma but was employed as an errand/tea girl. Evidently, the company would rather give out sub-contract work to the indigenes than employ them in a permanent position.

The presence of heat, gas flares and chemical residues in the communities as a result of oil exploration activities is affecting the land and food production. According to Manby (1999: 61), “oil spills can kill large numbers of fish in a small area” as well as destroy hectares of farmland and crops. He also posits that “while spills in the open sea or in large creels in tidal areas disperse fairly quickly, oil spilled in freshwater swamps or affected fishponds in forest areas is confined to a small area; and can destroy much of the livelihood for those affected in the freshwater swamp, where fishing areas and fishponds belong to particular families.” Oil spills also can be very destructive on dry land where the local population farm, as was the case in Obelle in 1998 when there was an outbreak of fire due to leakage in an oil well (shown in picture six) that destroyed hectares of farmlands.

Oil exploration in Obelle and Obagi has affected the quality of the people’s life. There is environmental pollution as well as inadequate food production, which ultimately influences the inhabitants’ ability to provide basic household needs for

themselves and their families, as well as rendering them unable to procure or access medical care, badly needed as a result of the heightened threat to health from oil exploration and extraction activities. Brisibe (2001: 6) noted that the exposure to crude oil has detrimental consequences for the local population and concludes that, “inhalation of high levels of crude oil fumes can lead to adverse effects on the nervous and respiratory systems, sometimes causing life threatening chemical pneumonitis and other systemic effects.”



**Picture 6: Oil Well 4 in Obelle (The oil well shown in above picture is now referred to as a dead well due to the 1998 fire outbreak caused by a leak in the well head that devastated hectares of farm land)**

Summarizing the negative consequences of oil exploration and extraction on the quality of life of the people in the Niger Delta region, Interviewee Number 9 stated:

The air pollution by Shell brings typhoid fever. Formerly, when you plant crops, they will yield very well but now, the crops do not yield well because of the activities of Shell. A year before last, there was a fire outbreak in our farmland and all the cassava in every farm died. Before now, we did not know what typhoid fever was but now so many people are suffering from it because of the

smoke in the air through the pollution by Shell. If the rain falls into our wells and we drink from it, we get sick of typhoid fever. Since Shell came to Nigeria we have been experiencing these problems. They burn down farmlands, pollute the air, water and land and the crops yield is very small. People get sick and they do not have money to go to the hospital and as a result, they die very young.

Similarly, Interviewee Number 23 narrated the consequences of oil exploration in the region as follows:

These people have acquired our lands. Those lands we have, we used to farm on and they have acquired with little or no compensation so the place we used to farm is no longer owned by us. Now we cannot even afford to go and buy from the nearby villages because the money is not there and not only that they have polluted our water. If you go there the aquatic life like the crayfish that used to be there like lobsters they have all ran away. You can't see them again even the fish if you taste some of them they taste crude. Even if you go to our well now or I bring it and you check it you will see oil on top. Now if you listen very well, you will hear *gbrum, gbrum, gbrum*, that is the gas flaring and with this flaring you cannot hear very well and the gas is pouring on us and it causes the decay of our zinc...*this is the roofing sheets for their houses...* if you watch this zinc now, if it was night I would have asked you to stand beside it and you will be hearing *gbe, gbe, gbe, gbe, gbe*.

### **6.3 The Effects on the People's Culture**

The forces of globalization also deeply affect the social, moral, linguistic, religious, and cultural dimensions of people's lives; globalization also impacts the cultural institutions, leading to cultural globalization. Cultural globalization is a process of developing worldwide interconnections whereby a number of traditional practices, whole ways of life and worldviews disappear or sometimes integrate with other cultures. At other times, some communities resist integration with other cultures as a form of anti globalization (Appadurai, 1990). The global cultural contact has not bypassed the people of Obelle and Obagi communities where oil multinational corporations have become established with workers from all over the world. In order to analyze the impact of

globalization on the people's culture in Obelle and Obagi communities as a result of the activities of oil MNCs, the following questions were asked:

1. Do people from other communities, states, and nations, work with the oil companies in your community?
2. Has this affected your traditional ways of doing things?
3. If the answer is yes to the above question, in what ways?
4. Has oil exploration affected other aspects of your social life?
5. If the answer is yes to above, what are these aspects of your social life?

The responses to these questions indicate the negative effect of oil exploration on the culture of the people of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Although the relocation of multinational corporations to the countries of the south sometimes has some positive impact on the host communities, the presence of multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta, particularly in Obelle and Obagi, has had detrimental consequences for the local population. Brisibe (2001: 1) noted that in the course of oil exploitation and extraction activities in "the Niger Delta, which records the worst environmental pollution in Nigeria, if not the world as a whole, farmlands are destroyed, rivers polluted, villages sunk by flood, shrines desecrated, bodies of dead relatives carelessly exhumed and grind by construction companies' bulldozers." For example, Interviewee Number 23 stated:

During their process of searching for oil they shoot their dynamites here and there even in front of our shrines, they shoot. By the time the *juju-priests* will go to them, they only give them goat to sacrifice in order to appease their gods.

The responses from my field in-depth interviews and the literature indicate that the presence of oil MNCs in these communities has disrupted participation in cultural activities and has impacted on the language and way of dressing particularly for the youths of these communities. Interviewee Number 24 stated:

As these people come in they bring in diverse culture, diverse way of life, which our people that interact with them emulate and put into practice. The issue is, the enthusiasm that has been with the people when it comes to culture and tradition has gone down. People are thinking and behaving more like English people. People in this area interact with people of various nations and in the process, emulate them thereby, relegating the custom, the culture and the tradition of the people for the culture of the English people. It has affected our social life because of the association and because of assimilation. Because, as you associate, you assimilate some things and come to exhibit them either as a character or attitude you have learned or acquired by these associations. We tend to dress like them you know, and some speak like them too. Some behave like them, some are rough...some of the people that come to this place are rough, they speak some dirty language which some of our people equally emulate. Yeah, so it has in a way affected our culture.

Responding to the impact on traditional social activities, Interviewee Number 19 stated:

Many people don't get themselves involved in traditional social activities because they spend more time going for contracts.

The quest for contract jobs that will bring financial gains to enable the people take care of their families has become more important than investing time in the preservation of indigenous culture. The people's moral life has also been impacted, as immorality is on the increase, leading to prostitution and illegitimate children, as well as broken homes. In view of this impact, Interviewee Number 23 stated:

"It has brought in many people from other places. Not only that they have made our girls to turn to prostitution because our girls now if you go to the location area you will see many of them hanging there. In the evening you see them hanging there. If you go there and watch it yourself you will see many girls renting house, living on their own just for the oil workers to come and meet them there. Prostitution, yes! A quick means of getting money. They have forced our women to divorce because of the poverty of the land and the women seeing the oilmen with their Mercedes and all the rest, you will see some of them divorcing their husbands to join them, they are so many."

Still on the issue of the effect of oil exploration activities on the people's culture, Interviewee Number 23 continued:



“The people who come in here don’t know our culture. They don’t know that married people here are restricted from moving out and joining other men. These Shell workers...*since Shell is the biggest oil producing company in Nigeria, people often refer to any other oil company and/or its staff as Shell or Shell workers*...they don’t know our culture. They come into the community pick married women but our culture here is that married women don’t go out with other men but they use their money power to convince them because money can speak louder and not only that, they come here and behave any how. Like here there are some certain things, which you cannot do. Some beliefs that one cannot do here, they do it.”

Corroborating the above narrative, Manby (1999: 52)<sup>2</sup> noted, “with the influx of comparatively rich and almost all male workers from the well- paid oil industry elite, has also come increased prostitution in previously isolated and stable communities.” Ekine (1999:2) has confirmed that “prostitution is on the increase” and that in the Niger Delta, “ many towns and villages have seen an influx of male workers from other parts of Nigeria as well as a large expatriate community” and notes that the situation, “together with poverty, illiteracy and lack of any alternatives has led many young girls into prostitution...and are made to engage in bestiality by some expatriates.” Since the Niger Delta region has become a militarized zone, Ekine (1999: 4) also noted “there is also, military prostitution - wherever the army goes they set up their own brothels forcing local girls to prostitute themselves.” For instance, Interviewee Number 24 stated:

“It has impacted on us negatively in social aspects, the level of immorality is not what we used to witness and not only that the level of social vices like petty stealing and other things have now been so high and with their presence, a lot of things are happening, they are not satisfying the people adequately, they are not giving employment opportunity to people that actually need it. Like the adage that says, the idle mind is the devil’s workshop, not everybody can contain themselves whereas some people might be compelled to do one thing or the other that is evil per se. So, it has impacted on us negatively. And when you weigh the both sides, you will find out that negative side by far out weigh the positive.”

Overall, there appears to be little respect for elders and their gods have been desecrated. It seems that all that people here care about is the love of money. According to Interviewee Number 13:

“Before the outsiders came to Obagi especially our daughters were very responsible and they worked hard, they helped their parents but now no body cares about family affairs or home-work. Majority of them now follow the oyinbo people (*meaning white people and in this case, white men*)... to be going about hunting for men. Because of the presence of these strangers, they go there to make their own money” (*in the form of prostitution*).

In Obelle and Obagi, their ways of life were, and still are to an extent, built on age-old traditions with deep ties to and interdependence on the ecosystem where they live. However, with the on-going oil exploration activities the people can no longer maintain and practice their unique culture and traditional way of doing things, as narrated by the interviewees above. The ancestral relationship to a homeland, as exemplified by their forest gods, has also been desecrated in the process of dredging canals, laying oil pipes and blowing dynamite, as well as other processes of oil exploration that destroy/disturb the ecosystem (Interviewee Number 23, and Brisibe, 2001: 6).

The cultural identity of the people in Obelle and Obagi communities is in jeopardy, as the quest for basic sustenance, which was taken for granted prior to the commencement of oil exploration in the communities, has become a paramount concern for the people. Cultural activities are abandoned as people chase after oil contracts and petro-naira, and fight each other over who gets the royalties from the oil companies. It would not be unrealistic to state here that the unique culture of Obelle and Obagi will continue to disappear as the people adopt other cultures, particularly western culture as

narrated by Interviewee Number 24, and abandon their traditional cultural activities for the pursuit of petro-naira, as stated by Interviewee Number 19. Although my field work in Obelle and Obagi communities did not coincide with the celebration of any traditional festival, I did observe that the way of dressing for the youth, particularly young women and girls was not typical of a traditional community in Nigeria. Young women and girls who sit idle in their compounds during the day were seen in the evening dressed in jean pants and strapless tops, soliciting oil workers at the oil location/quarters.

The spread and promotion of western ideals of capitalism, individualism, the quest for money, and immediate gratification has overshadowed participation in traditional cultural activities. Consequently, in view of the impact of oil exploration activities, the deep sense of community, morality, social cohesion and solidarity hitherto enjoyed by the people is gradually being eroded, making it easy for families and communities that have co-existed peacefully before the commencement of oil exploration and extraction to come into conflict with each other over oil royalties and ownership of land. As narrated by Interviewee Number 23, the situation created by the pursuit of oil contracts and royalties has exacerbated ethnic conflict and tension in these communities, as highlighted in Section 6.4 below.

#### **6.4 Impact of Oil Exploration on Ethnic Tension and Conflict**

This section is based on the perception of the nature, effect, and reasons behind the inter/intra ethnic conflicts in the communities.<sup>3</sup> To obtain the information the participants were asked the following questions:

1. Has there been any ethnic conflict and tension between members of your community and members of other communities since the commencement of oil exploration?
2. Has there been any communal tension/conflict between and among members of your community?
3. If the answer is yes to the above question, please state what form the tension/conflict has taken.
4. What has been your experience during ethnic conflict?
5. What or who do you think is responsible for this ethnic tension/conflict?
6. What do you think can be done to reduce ethnic tension/ethnic in your community?

As stated in chapter 2, section 2.3.1, ethnic tension and conflict that was initiated at the time of independence in competition for political and economic resources and opportunity has become exacerbated by the oil MNCs as they capitalize on the situation by pitting communities against each other. It is common knowledge that when people request compensation for damages to their environment and means of livelihood, the oil MNCs, in alliance with the Nigerian government, have often committed acts of violence against poor people by instigating community against community or using the military and supernumerary police force to undermine local justice initiatives. By turning communities against each other, oil MNCs distract the communities from the negative consequences of oil exploration and continue their exploration activities unhampered. The narratives from the interviewees as highlighted in this section further illustrate this point.

Outcomes of ethnic tension and conflict affect more negatively on the women than the men of these communities because the responsibility of keeping the family and home together rests on them. Often the soldiers deployed by the government to the region during inter/intra communal conflict/crisis situations rape the women and young girls.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, Ekine (1999) observed that prostitution and rape, in particular, “has

become a ritual amongst the occupying military and armed police forces as well as security personnel employed by the oil companies.” Women also suffer physical violence, mental and emotional abuse, as well violence against their property. Ekine (1999:2) observed that, “in every instance, the military and police have turned peaceful demonstrations and protests into carnage” noting that “the simple act of a young girl in the Niger Delta region taking food to her brother who has been jailed for distributing protest leaflets often results in her being beaten by the police.” Similarly, some interviewees in the in-depth interview of this study in Obagi noted that one Ms Theresa Nwabueze was shot and killed by the oil company’s supernumerary police during a youth protest.

Ekine (1999) posits that once violence has been established, it does not have to actually take place because the knowledge that violence is possible has made the women in the Niger Delta region often walk in fear of being raped, beaten or maimed as they go about their daily household chores. In addition to this suffering, “many husbands, fathers, and sons have been killed or maimed, leaving the women to assume even greater responsibilities” (Ekine, 1999:3) of taking care of their households even as “their farms are ransacked or their produce stolen.” Furthermore, Ekine (1999: 3) has argued that these acts of violence against the people of the Niger Delta, particularly women, are not random actions but “systematic acts aimed at destroying property and thereby further undermining Niger Delta communities in their quest for justice against oppression, marginalization, and underdevelopment.” Accordingly, distracting the host communities from the negative consequences of oil exploration activities, will give the oil MNCs an

unhampered opportunity to continue extracting oil without adequate protection for the environment and people's means of livelihood.

In response to the question of how ethnic conflict and tension in the region impact on women, Interviewee Number 24 had this to say:

The women face several experiences like in the situation of crisis...Because they are more at home, they take care of the little ones, take care of the home, and when there is crisis, we find out that they will be so worried about the safety of the home, about the safety of their parents, of their husbands and their children. They suffer more because they will be subjected to evacuating things away from the houses. Sometimes they initiate peace to settle the war impact and they lost a lot economically because most of them engage in trading and things like that. They lose their properties too. ...and some children.

Interviewee Number 23 also gave the following response to the same question:

The women are restless because by the time they hear that there is a problem in the council and their husbands are in the council you will see that they will be restless and start thinking. If their husbands do not come home on time they will think that they have taken you away you see! Even mothers, the old mothers, because of thinking they get hypertension and die.

The field data show that, due to the deprivation and poverty experienced by the local population in the midst of plenty, local people express their grievances by rioting or demonstrating against the government or oil MNCs in the hope that changes would be implemented to alleviate their suffering. Accordingly, Interviewee Number 13 stated:

At times when the village people will need something from the company, they will refuse and the people can go for rioting. There are also problems between Obagi people and their neighbours. Like the one of Ogbogoro and Obagi as a result of land, some of them are fighting over land because Elf people have occupied the place. They fight so that they will claim the damage or royalty from the land. So, it also causes conflict between village and village. Like the recent one we are having now, Umuachi and Umuokpru. There is money that the company pays to the villagers but at times they are reluctant of doing it until the youth or the families go to rioting before they will now call a meeting and adhere to it. Two years ago, the youth rioted and the company people invited MOPOL

*(acronym for military police)* and army and in the process of shooting each other, they shot a lady and she died. The way they are treating the communities because if you come to someone's land and occupy a little space, anything the landlord tells you, you should do it because you are also gaining. But instead of them doing it, they want to cause problems between families, between villagers, and between the communities.

However, the research findings indicate that the government, in alliance with the oil MNCs, often times undermine the people's struggle by sending in the military to harass, intimidate, and brutalize the people should they ask for compensation by peaceful demonstration or rioting. Further, at other times, the government and oil MNCs have instigated neighbouring communities or families against the community or family asking for compensation, a situation the local population has come to refer to as "oil politics."

Interviewee Number 24 stated:

Yes, there have been several conflicts. There have been some situations of misunderstanding, whereby the other communities either see Obagi as a stumbling block or as not being too pushful to agitate for things that might benefit the entire communities of Egi because they look at Obagi as the number one and as such, they expect so much from us. Where this expectation is not being met, they react angrily or negatively towards our community. Also, the politics being played by these multinationals ... they sometimes, create problems so that the situation will be a bit freer for them to operate. When the people are fighting themselves, the oil companies will have a lot of time to carry out their operations unhampered. So they are in a way contributing to these crises.

The narrative from Interviewee Number 23 illustrates how the political and economic forces at the international and national levels have impacted on development in Nigeria, resulting in persistent and continuous inter and intra-ethnic conflicts and tensions, particularly in the Niger Delta region. The following is an excerpt from Interviewee Number 23, illustrating the impact of oil exploration activities on class and intra-communal tension:

There are mostly chieftaincy tensions. Like here now we have what we call Eze Egi taking care of the Egi clan then we have one Oba, the Oba of Ogba land. Because of the presence of Elf the Oba has alienated Eze Egi and that has caused his non-recognition by the government and you always see them clashing because the Oba thought that if Eze Egi is recognized, that he will have less access to Elf that is operating in Egi and this company even go to Oba to collaborate with him to cause trouble here. If the trouble escalates he will start to search for all these people under his council. You cannot travel freely you will be in hiding. Because of this oil the chiefs in Obagi council get divided because of the oil politics and the oil company in order to get little thing from them and the youths too fight among themselves because this one will like to be chairman and the other one would like to be chairman so you see them going to court. Even the oil company and youths like the recent case the youths went on a peaceful demonstration the MOPOL commander shot a lady, one Theresa Nwabueze and she died.

### **6.5 Impact on Agricultural Production**

People in Obelle and Obagi, as in the entire Niger Delta region, are primarily peasant farmers, fishers, food processors, craftspeople and artisans who sustain themselves from their own land and labour. Some of the local population also engage in small-scale trading and local income generating projects. As stated previously, the men are considered the head and breadwinners of the families, while the women are their supporters. However, in reality the women work much harder than their male counterparts (Brisibe, 1999: 5). The women take care of their families; they trade, fish and undertake peasant-farming activities. Their tasks are both productive and reproductive, while the men are mostly involved in only production tasks such as farming, palm wine tapping, building canoes and speed boat driving.

In order to determine the impact of the activities of the oil MNCs on agricultural production in these communities the following questions were posed and the ensuing responses were analyzed:

1. Have you ever farmed?



2. If the answer is “Yes” to the above question, are you still farming?
3. If the answer is “No” to the above question, why are you no longer/or not farming?
4. Do you have access to farmland?
5. Has there been a decrease or increase in your agricultural production?
6. If so, why?
7. What has been your agricultural/farming experience since the multinational corporations started oil exploration in your community?

Any destruction or destabilization of the ecosystem would have detrimental consequences for people whose only means of sustenance and household economy depends on their land and natural environment <sup>5</sup>. The people of Obelle and Obagi communities and other ethnic groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria who do not have rights of ownership to their lands<sup>6</sup> are also saddled with environmental devastation, pollution, and exploitation.

“A typical, traditional family in the Niger Delta region believed in preserving lands for generations born and yet unborn, and this was a tradition that built strong family ties and enabled the local people to contribute to their individual and collective development. The land was and still is their major source of livelihood. They eat, wash, live, die, fill their spirituality, and build their dreams and their tomorrows on these lands” (Brisibe, 2001: 4).

Consequently, land is the most important piece in the lives of the people. In view of the situation, Interview Number 21 noted:

In a situation where a farmer depends on what comes out of his farm to educate, feed and cloth his family considering that the yield is very small has taken a toll on the people. If your farm is not destroyed, your health is affected. Once something is air born, it can affect any body.

Toxins from gas flare, as shown in the background of Picture Seven and Picture Eight below, have also negatively affected agricultural production.



**Picture 7: Oil Well Head and Gas Flare a Few Meters from People's Homes/farms**  
(See also, Picture 8 below)

Other respondents have also corroborated the fact that alienation<sup>7</sup> from land has negative consequences for agricultural production and, subsequently, the ability to provide for families. For example, Interviewee Number 11 stated:

“They have collected every land, they have collected everywhere. It (*farm yield*) has decreased since we don't have a place to farm again.”

Substantiating the above narratives by the interviewees, Manby (1999: 61) noted that

“Local fishermen complain at reduced catches in recent years, and attribute the decline to pollution from oil operations--both oil spillages and other effects such as increased turbidity of the water caused by dredging or traffic of large motor-powered craft.”

The World Bank (2000: 16) also noted that “decreases in farm yield in the oil producing communities have often coincided with the beginning of oil production; consequently, this phenomenon has been attributed to the activities of oil companies.” The situation, as illustrated by the above responses, reinforces the fact that, Shell, Total, and all the other

oil MNCs in the region are clamouring for land for oil exploration activities and these are traditionally farming communities; farmland is now scarce. Interviewee Number 17 stated:

“There is not enough land for people to farm that is why everything has decreased. ... Like in my own house now, there is nothing that you will plant that will germinate very well. The thing will maybe grow a little and die off because we have an oil well very close to our house.”



**Picture 8: Three Oil Well Heads located closely together and very close to people’s homes. (There is also a gas flare in the background, close to homes).**

In summary, agricultural production has been negatively affected by oil MNCs’ activities in view of the Nigerian 1978 Land Use Act and the Petroleum Act, which has alienated people from farmland. Also, as narrated by the interviewees above, toxins from gas flares and other related activities of oil exploration have affected the fertility of the soil on whatever small pieces of farmland that are still available. Consequently, the

people have, first of all, lost ownership of the land. Second, the ecosystem, which is their means/source of livelihood, has been destroyed by the activities of oil MNCs which do not abide by environmental laws because the Nigerian environmental laws are weak and rarely enforced. Quite interesting is the fact that none of the participants in the survey or in-depth interview expressed a desire to be relocated from the present location; this was despite the pollution in the communities and the destruction of their only source of livelihood, as the people are predominantly farmers and petty traders, selling whatever was left from their subsistence farming. However, some of the people who participated in this study in Obelle and Obagi expressed a desire for the government and oil MNCs to relocate them to land far removed from the toxins polluting their environment, so that they would be able to farm again in a fertile, non-polluted environment.

#### **6.6 The Impact of Oil Exploration and Extraction on the Environment and Economic Self-Sufficiency of the People**

The analysis of this section is based on the questions from the interview protocol that focused on the following: the positive and negative impact on the environment the government and oil companies' responses to the negative environmental effect, the community's strategy for protecting the environment, the community's strategy for challenging the negative effect on economic self-sufficiency of the people, the government and oil companies' responses to the impact on the quality of life of the people, and the suggestions of the participants for the improvement of their environment and economic status.

### 6.6.1 The Effect on the Environment

Obelle and Obagi communities, as with most other communities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, have suffered serious environmental degradation mainly from toxins caused by gas flaring and oil spills resulting in the pollution of the air, water, and soil. The following excerpt from Interviewee Number 21 illustrates the impact of oil exploration activities on the environment in the Niger Delta region:

“There was sometime in 2000 when people were sent from the University of Port Harcourt here with a questionnaire just like what you are doing now. So among them was a white man. When I was talking to them, I mentioned that there was a rise in the temperature of this place resulting in people hardly sleeping at night. So when I mentioned this, that struck a note and he now said when they were driving because they came with a very sophisticated car, this modern jeep. He said that when they were driving from Emuoha local government and as soon as they got to this place that the temperature of his car was raised to an unprecedented heat, giving credence to my allegation. So I want to tell you that in this place now people no longer sleep with their doors closed, the temperature is always charged 24 hours. So you see people with high incidents of skin cancer, stroke, rashes and high blood pressure and related illnesses.”

As shown by the preceding narrative above, the situation has had a detrimental effect on people’s quality of life, as well as economic self-sufficiency, as illustrated by Interviewee Number 8, whose response focused on economic self-sufficiency, and Interviewee Number 13, whose response is focused on the quality of life. According to Interviewee Number 8,

“In the olden days we used to farm and feed our families well but now farm work does not produce anything.”

Interviewee number 13 opined that:

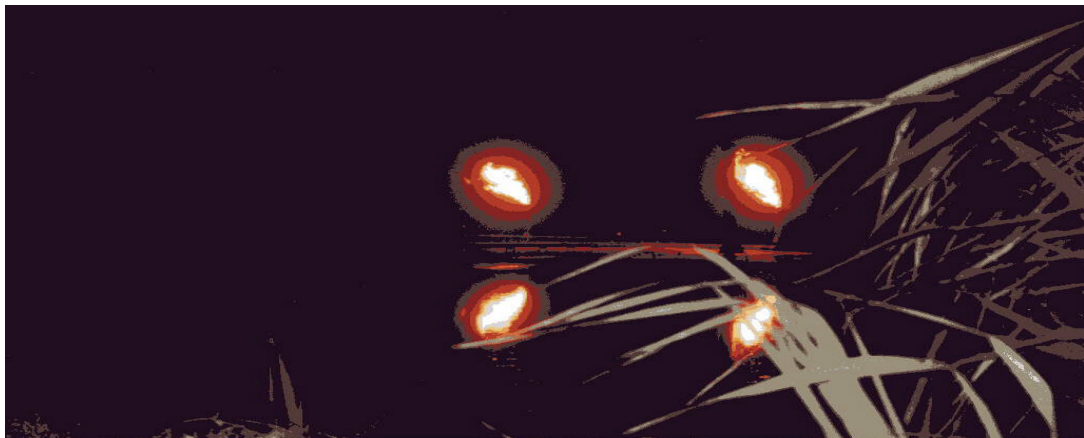
“Oil exploration affects the health by making people sick. The water, though we have pipe-borne water, it is contaminated especially the one in the well and even the one in the pond. Because, when we did not have pipe borne water, people

fetches water from the pond and well too but it is now been polluted. It affects the land by polluting the land, which is not yielding well as before.”

Pollution and contamination of the environment in the Niger Delta region is a steady occurrence, which has a detrimental impact on the local population in view of the continuous gas flare, as shown in Pictures Nine and Ten below.



**Picture 9: Gas Flare and Old Oil Pipe Lines Criss-crossing the River (Day time picture)**



**Picture 10: Night Time picture of Gas Flare and Old Oil Pipe Lines Criss-crossing the River**

The responses and narratives of the interviewees' perception of the impact of oil exploration on their economic self-sufficiency show a link between environmental degradation and poverty. Ekine (1999: 3) noted, "poverty and lack of development ... are a direct result of the complete disregard for every aspect of indigenous life and property" in the Niger Delta region. Ekine (1999: 3) further cited an oil spill incident in the region to illustrate the utter disregard for indigenous life and property in the Niger Delta: "Last year we saw the death of hundreds of women - women with children on their backs - struggling in all their poverty to collect drops of fuel - which at the same time were destroying the very environment in which they lived. The suffering did not end there, as the military regime refused any help for victims, instead, together with the multinationals, the military spent their time accusing the people of sabotaging the pipelines."

There are no hospitals or medical clinics in Obelle and Obagi communities; therefore, after having been exposed to the toxins in the air, water and soil resulting from the activities of oil exploration, the people have no-where to turn for medical care unless they travel to Port Harcourt or another city. Also, the natural source and knowledge of traditional herbal medicine and the actual presence of herbal plants have been destroyed as a result of the activities of oil MNCs in the region. All the people have is not a hospital but a hospital signpost by the roadside (See Picture Eleven below). Most people are so poor that they cannot afford healthcare in the hospitals or private clinics in the city such as Port Harcourt or Omoku, which are the closest towns to Obagi and Obelle communities.





**Picture 11: This Signpost is the closest thing to a hospital that Obagi community has. (There was not even a signpost in Obelle community, indicating that no one has given it a thought as a future possibility).**

Summarizing the impact of oil exploration activities on the environment, Interviewee Number 24 stated:

The impact has been negative. In the sense that the environment is degraded, I mean is degraded. There is environmental degradation per se. The natural things we see around here are no longer there, there is extinction of many species of trees, fish, and aquatic lives you know, so, there are several things that have gone wrong. So, it has impacted negatively to a great extent. Then the exploration too is just as you can witness it here. The effect is so, uhm. So great. Most of the time, you see heat all over the place, you feel heat and we don't enjoy the natural atmosphere anymore. By their flaring of gas, you find out that some diseases get spread into the air, which we either knowingly or unknowingly breathe in and it causes a lot of health problems. Like the report that came up sometime ago that ONELGA has the highest number of tuberculosis patients because of this exploration and other things that is associated somehow.

Corroborating the narrative of Interviewee Number 24, Ekine (1999: 4-5) observed that, in addition to the impact on the environment, there are no medical or support facilities to cope with the needs of the victims of oil spills, pipe blowouts, and oil well



leaks, as well as the horrors of sexual violence suffered by the women, which is further compounded by unwanted pregnancies. Ekine (1999: 2) further noted that “the poverty level in this region has aggravated the situation in which the women find themselves ... there is nothing to alleviate the pain, there isn’t even time as children need to be fed, farms farmed, and produce sold.” The impact on the environment has a direct influence on the economic self-sufficiency of the local population whose means of livelihood are their farmlands and fishing creeks.

My observation of the land and environment in Obelle and Obagi corroborates the narratives above. The shrubs had a yellowish colour instead of the usual lush green colour one would expect in this part of Nigeria. On one of the community market’s day, the produce displayed for sale was not very appealing to a potential buyer who may have other choices such as the money and ability to buy from a distant market.

#### **6.6.2 Impact on Economic Self-Sufficiency**

Respondents were asked what the government and oil MNCs have done to cushion the negative impact on their environment, which is their main source of livelihood and/or to ameliorate the negative impact on their quality of life and economic self-sufficiency. Also included were questions about what strategies and services the communities provided for their citizens in view of government and oil MNCs’ limited effort to lessen the negative impact of oil exploration activities on their economic self-sufficiency.

Responding to the questions of government and oil MNCs’ response, Interviewee Number 24 stated:

The government has not done anything. It has not done anything at all (*said with emphasis*). And if I may say so, they don't know. I do believe so because there is no impact of the government at all. I don't even believe that they would have done something because of the type of government we have in this country... (*Insinuating that Nigeria does not have a government for, by, and of the people*) They are not the caring type of government. On the part of the oil company, I think they have done little...(pause) nothing. By right they are supposed to shut down this thing (*indicating the gas flaring*) de-police, de-militarize some areas, close up the burrow pits that are used for the dumping of waste and things like that and possibly, put back into...return the land, the land fertility to its normal state. So, nothing is actually being done and in fact the environment is still experiencing a worst state. The effort of the government has not been too encouraging in the sense that their rules and other things that regulate oil activities has not been adhered to like in Obagi, there are some oil wells right in the heart of this community so it would have been an obligation by the government to see the law they promulgated that the law bars oil companies from sitting oil wells or their activities by giving at least two miles from homes. So, the only area I see that the government has placed some rules is on the demand for in fact eh, (pause) environmental impact assessment report which to an extent has been... is always distorted by this company to their own interest at the expense of the community. So, they are not doing much to encourage or improve the quality of lives and the environment we live in.

For Interviewee Number 21, the government:

Has not done anything except that they want to come up with a law banning the spill of carbons into the air and this is from the government side. But up till now they have not done anything like come up with a package to ameliorate our problems. There is no aid to help us, no healthcare services, no water, they don't even know what we are talking about. We do not feel the presence of the government here. We have not had any responsible government since the 1960s. They can't even take care of the problem in the government house let alone in the community. When the government is not even paying attention to our complaints, it becomes a problem. Even water; see someone drawing water from that well (*pointing to the well outside his house and laughed*) if you look into that water you will see mosquito larva right inside the water we are going to drink. As you know this cholera is water born disease and malaria is water born disease because the mosquito that causes it breed right inside the water so we need water to stop that problem of cholera. Cholera has been cured in advanced countries it no longer kills people yet here it is our chief problem.

Interviewee Number 21 further stated that the oil MNCs have not done anything to cushion the negative impact of oil exploration in their community:

Except for the market, the solar water tank that is not functioning and the six-classroom block, which is not furnished.

In addition, Interviewee Number 21 stated:

To tell you the level of negligence of this oil company, in January this year one of their tankers that came to lift crude oil pulled down some electric poles that rendered the community into darkness and up till now they have not done anything to solve this problem. They have turbine and they have refused to give us electricity from it. Not even water; they have water over there, so this will tell you the level of negligence.

When asked what the government has done to ameliorate the negative consequences of oil exploration in their community, Interviewee Number 23 stated:

The government as I can say are useless people. They have been shouting, shouting and don't do anything. And one thing is that by the time one person is in power he will talk and talk, and in a little time he is gone and another person will come with his own idea even when some of them are not workable. Even about our general environment and the agriculture we talked about you see the government talking and publishing that they will take care of it and you see them making noise on the radio and television but they don't do those things they talk about.

Also responding to the question on what the oil MNCs have done, respondent Number 23 stated:

Well, the oil companies have tried in their own little way and out of selfishness they provide seedlings at Ogborgu, and if they give you ten seedlings at the time of harvest they will come and take up to twenty times. Maybe you have a surplus of three they will collect that one and next season they will return to collect the big ones and leave the little ones for you. So indirectly you are working for them. Even when they give you goats, you will take the goat from here to there feeding the goat and when the goat delivers they will come and pick it and leave the mother for you to continue. So you see that they are just selfish. Even the scholarships they give they may give to just three people and since every body wants it they will have to fight among themselves and this is just the divide and rule tactics of the oil company.

The divide and rule tactics mentioned above by Interviewee Number 23 is reminiscent of the indirect rule of the colonial administration in Nigeria from 1914 to the late 1950s as highlighted in chapter 2.

Despite the detrimental effect of oil exploration activities in these communities, a few of the respondents such as Interviewee Number 24 noted that the presence of oil MNCs and their activities “has brought economic independence to some of the people, but the majority of the people are still wallowing in poverty and suffering as a result of the environmental degradation, with the soil not being fertile as a result of the emission of the chemicals into the soil and also not having sufficient land for farming.” The lack of a positive response from the government and oil MNCs has further compounded the suffering of the local population by rendering them economically dependent.

## **6.7 Thematic Analysis**

One major theme emerged from all the narratives/responses of the interviewees in the analysis of the impact of the uneven application of the processes of globalization, in the Niger Delta region, namely, “violence and brutality as a result of oil exploration.” Consequently, it was decided to do a thematic analysis of this issue. Participants were given an opportunity to speak of their experiences in their own voices according to the principles of qualitative research, and allow the readers of this thesis to judge for themselves the trustworthiness of my interpretations (Riessman, 1993) of their narratives. The analysis of this section also seeks to examine if the problem of violence and brutality is generated entirely by external factors (globalization, implemented

through the activities of oil companies) or if there are internal factors too (such as ethnicity and despotic leaders).

The analysis of this theme is based on the interview questions that focus on the responses by the government and oil MNCs to the negative effect on the people in view of the activities of oil exploration and extraction in the Niger Delta region. It has been argued in the literature that when people agitate for a change in the status quo by peaceful demonstrations or protests, violence is often used to undermine such struggles (Ekine, 1999: 1-2). Listening to the participants in the in-depth interview part of the study and reading the in-depth interview transcripts, one could tell that a similar situation was going on in the oil rich Niger Delta region; the oil MNCs would invite the police, military or navy to harass, intimidate and attack the indigenes if there was a perceived threat to the oil installations or oil wells or, if the indigenes were planning peaceful protests against the activities of oil MNCs. The Nigerian government is also implicated in this matter, as it has become common knowledge in the Niger Delta region that a battalion of the military is deployed in the region in order to prevent any protest against the negative consequences of oil exploration and extraction. The theme, “Violence and Brutality as a Result of Oil Exploration” has been used in this section to examine how violence and brutality is used to undermine the people’s struggle for justice and compensation for the destruction of the environment and means of livelihood.

### **6.7.1 Violence and Brutality as a Result of Oil Exploration**

Participants in the in-depth interviews were not asked questions that directly focused on violence and brutality as a result of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region. Nonetheless, this theme came up in their responses and narratives, particularly when they were asked to talk about the responses of the government and oil MNCs to the negative impact on their quality of life, economic status, and environment, as well as the relationship between the communities and the oil MNCs.

In the last 15 years, the Niger Delta has been under military surveillance and the people have been subjected to a continuum of violence and human rights violations by the Nigerian government and its partners, the multinational oil companies (Ekine, 1999: 1-3). Accordingly, Interviewee Number 24 suggested that the Niger Delta region should be “de-policed” or de-militarized. In other words, the military battalion stationed in most of the communities in the Niger Delta region should be removed since the local government headquarters already have police posts and the state capital, Port Harcourt, has a stationed military battalion. An unknown number of people in the Niger Delta region, including women and children, have been killed and displaced by the military personnel deployed by the Nigerian government and the supernumerary police hired by the oil MNCs (Ekine, 1999; Manby, 1999). The use of violence and brutality on the people of the Niger Delta is a result of their non-violent declarations such as the 1998 Kaiama declaration, and the Aklaka declaration of the Egi people.<sup>8</sup> Violence also sometimes erupts from peaceful demonstrations, “which are within the realms of legitimate protest” (Ekine, 1999:2) against the oil exploration activities by the oil MNCs

in alliance with the Nigerian government. In corroborating this point, Interviewee

Number one stated:

They (*the government and oil MNCs*) don't even care! Because, really, the history may say that they are going to care. There is a place I lived and we were all asked to give our names saying that they were going to compensate us because of the gas we inhale so, we gave our names but nothing came out of it up till date to remedy the situation of the people inhaling the gas fumes in that community. So, you will find out that the poor masses are suffering because of it. Yes, the government does not even care. If the community starts telling them by way of demonstration, they will bring in MOPOL (Mobile Police) in order to shut up the people. So, every body just keeps quiet. If the people demonstrate in protest, the government will arrest them. People have been suffering because of it thereby, people fighting each other here and there. They (*the community*) fight with the government or the oil company.

The government and oil MNCs react in order to keep the local population from demonstrating against the forces of their oppression and the negative consequences of oil exploration. Consequently, it has been argued that oil MNCs' operations would be "impossible unless ruthless military operations are undertaken for smooth economic activities" (Manby, 1999: 111). Manby (1999) further noted that Nigerian soldiers were involved in attacks on the Ogoni by a neighbouring ethnic group, the Andoni, during the height of the Ogoni crisis in 1994. It has been argued, that the attacks were apparently designed to punish the Ogonis for their resistance to oil production and to justify a security crackdown to maintain law and order and hence, oil revenue (Manby, 1999).

Corroborating this view, Interviewee Number 11 stated:

"At times the companies collect MOPOLs and they will be shooting at people"

It has been shown in the literature on the Niger Delta region and from the voices of the participants of the in-depth interviews that the activities of oil MNCs in the exploration of crude oil in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have led to the

militarization of the region; consequently, this has led to violence and brutality toward the local population.<sup>9</sup> It has been noted that Shell, like other oil MNCs in Nigeria, hire “supernumerary police”<sup>10</sup> and has “in the past imported side arms on behalf of the Nigerian police force, for use by the “supernumerary police” who are on attachment to Shell and guard the company’s facilities against general crime” (Manby, 1999: 9). Although Shell argued that the negotiations for the purchase of these arms have not been concluded, the company has stated that “it cannot give an undertaking not to provide weapons in the future, as, due to the deteriorating security situation in Nigeria, we may want to see the weapons currently used by the police who protect Shell staff and property upgraded” (Manby, 1999: 9). These “upgraded” weapons, purported to be used for the protection of Shell staff and properties, are often used against the youths and people of the host communities who stage peaceful demonstrations against the negative consequences of oil exploration in the region. In some cases, people who are not directly involved in such protests are equally negatively impacted as they get arrested or even killed. For example, Interviewee Number 23 stated:

Like the recent case when the youths went on a peaceful demonstration the MOPOL commander shot a lady, one Theresa Nwabueze, who was just returning from somewhere and was not part of the demonstration, and at the gate of the oil company Elf as she was just coming down from the motor cycle, the MOPOL man just shot her and she died.

Even with their own “police” force in place, it has also been noted that the oil MNCs do not waste any time in calling for security force protection from the military or navy whenever they feel there is a threat to their installation or facilities. Often, this threat comes in the form of a peaceful demonstration. According to Interviewee Number one, “if they demonstrate, before they demonstrate not up to three hours, they will send



forces or MOPOL (*acronym for Military/mobile Police*) to come and arrest some of them.” One of my respondents, corroborating the literature, noted that, “It is not only this place. Many other places are not gaining from Shell; rather, Shell is just killing the people in these communities” (Interviewee Number 10).

When community members in the Niger Delta attempt to demand better treatment in the form of compensation for farmlands that have been taken, and reparation for the destruction of the environment and means of livelihood from the government or the oil MNCs in the region, their attempts (whether through peaceful demonstration or a written letter), are often met with repression from the military and other armed forces the oil MNCs call upon in their claim “for security force protection” (Manby, 1999: 112) against the poor indigenes. The most serious case in the last 15 years is “the incident at Umuechem in 1990, where a Shell manager made a written and explicit request for Mobile Police (a notoriously abusive force) protection, leading to the killing of eighty unarmed civilians and the destruction of hundreds of homes” (Manby, 1999: 113). The Umuechem incident is relevant to me because, at the time of the incident, I was living and serving in the National Youth Service Corps in a community a few kilometres from Umuechem; this incident was the first of its kind in the region in recent years. The violence and brutality suffered by the poor masses of this community made local headline news and have since been a point of reference when discussing the impact of oil exploration in the Niger Delta, until the Ogoni crisis that followed a few years later.

One other situation in which the local population suffers violence and brutality as a result of the activities of oil MNCs is what has become known as “oil politics.” In ‘oil politics,’ it is claimed by some of my respondents that one or more

communities/families instigate against another community or family with the complicity of the oil MNCs in order to maintain inter-family/inter-community tension and conflict. It has also been argued that this situation is conducive to the oil MNCs to carry on, in an undisturbed way, their activities that are detrimental to the people's quality of life and economic self-sufficiency. According to Interviewee Number 23:

This oil company will even instigate other people to come into your land so that there will be trouble so that by the time you make demands they will say go and settle first and when you settle they will just keep their money.

Consequently, while this conflict is going on between these people, the oil exploration activities are also continuing to go on. It has therefore become general opinion and common knowledge that the oil companies do this to distract the villagers' attention from their activities so that they can continue extracting oil. Accordingly, Interviewee Number 23 noted:

Because if you are together, you can make your demands, but if you are divided you cannot achieve anything. Your focus will be on going to court *or fighting each other* rather than going to disturb them.

For Interviewee Number 24:

This company brought in a different kind of politics... a "politics of dog eat dog"...in the sense that people started fighting against each other in different ways in different forms too because they want these things, some started betraying their own brothers just to make sure that they gain these things. So, in a way, the coming of this company has not actually united us. It is in a way disuniting us. The politics being played by these multinationals because like I stated earlier, they sometimes, create problems so that the situation will be a bit freer for them to operate. When the people are fighting themselves, they will have a lot of time to carry out their operations unhampered. So, they are in a way contributing to these crises.

Describing the relationship between the community and the oil MNCs, Interviewee Number 24 noted that it is based on the recognition of some cliques.

Some persons identified as their agents. Unless you belong to this group, you don't see anything. So, their patronage has always been towards these groups. Yes, the groups they recognize, they patronize, either towards destabilizing the community or to instill confusion in the minds of the people because, somehow too, they thrive in a situation of confusion, this situation gives comfort to the people (*meaning the oil companies*).

The above views expressed by Interviewee Number 24 corroborate the argument by Ekine (1999) that violence is used against the people to intimidate, damage, and destroy as well as undermine their struggles against injustice and marginalization.

Some of the interviewees are also aware of the price they have to pay in order to benefit from the exploration and extraction of crude oil from the Niger Delta. According to Interviewee Number 22, communities that stand up to the brutality and demand compensation or change in the form of development usually would benefit somewhat at the end of the day.

According to one of our neighbouring community Obidoga, we learnt that Shell has built roads for them and they have constant electricity supply from Shell gas turbine and they gave them scholarships up to the university and employ them. Their chiefs are paid and so many other things there. But coming to our own, zero! I can say that whenever Shell company ask our people what they can do for them and we present our needs to them, they will cause our people to be in conflict and they use that as an excuse that they don't do anything for an area that causes problems but they have the right to continue tapping the resources of our people. But other areas handle them roughly and they go there and do something for them. Like Elf, Agip and so many other oil companies operating in so many other areas, all these things I mentioned that we are lacking here, they give to these communities free. Although many of them complain that they use violence before the companies will do those things for them. I don't know whether we should use such action here before they will do things for us (Interviewee Number 22).

Confirming this claim, I was told that the on-going road construction in Obagi during my field work was a result of the violent confrontation between the youths and the supernumerary police hired by the oil company that resulted in the killing of Miss

Nwabueze and the detention/imprisonment of others. The good news from the violence and brutality in Obagi is that the network of roads (shown in the picture on page 131) has since been completed and is now being used by the community.

Unlike Obelle, the people of Obagi know that in order to have any form of benefit from the activities of oil MNCs, they have to sometimes confront the oil companies. Consequently, the members of Obagi community (as is the case of Obidoga community that was mentioned by Interviewee Number 22) understand that development comes with the price of bloodshed. The use of violence and brutality, as illustrated above, is a strategy to undermine the communities in the Niger Delta region and to discourage them from protesting the detrimental consequences of oil exploration and extraction from their land. This violence and brutality been documented by some scholars, most of whom have argued that the situation constitutes a violation of the human rights to sufficient housing/shelter, food and a safe environment.<sup>11</sup> Also, worthy of note is the fact although interviewees did not specifically mention personal violent experiences, one could tell there was a climate of violence hovering over them as illustrated in their narratives of a third person's experience. The reason could be that the interviewees did not feel a close rapport with the researcher (me) to delve into such personal traumatic experiences.

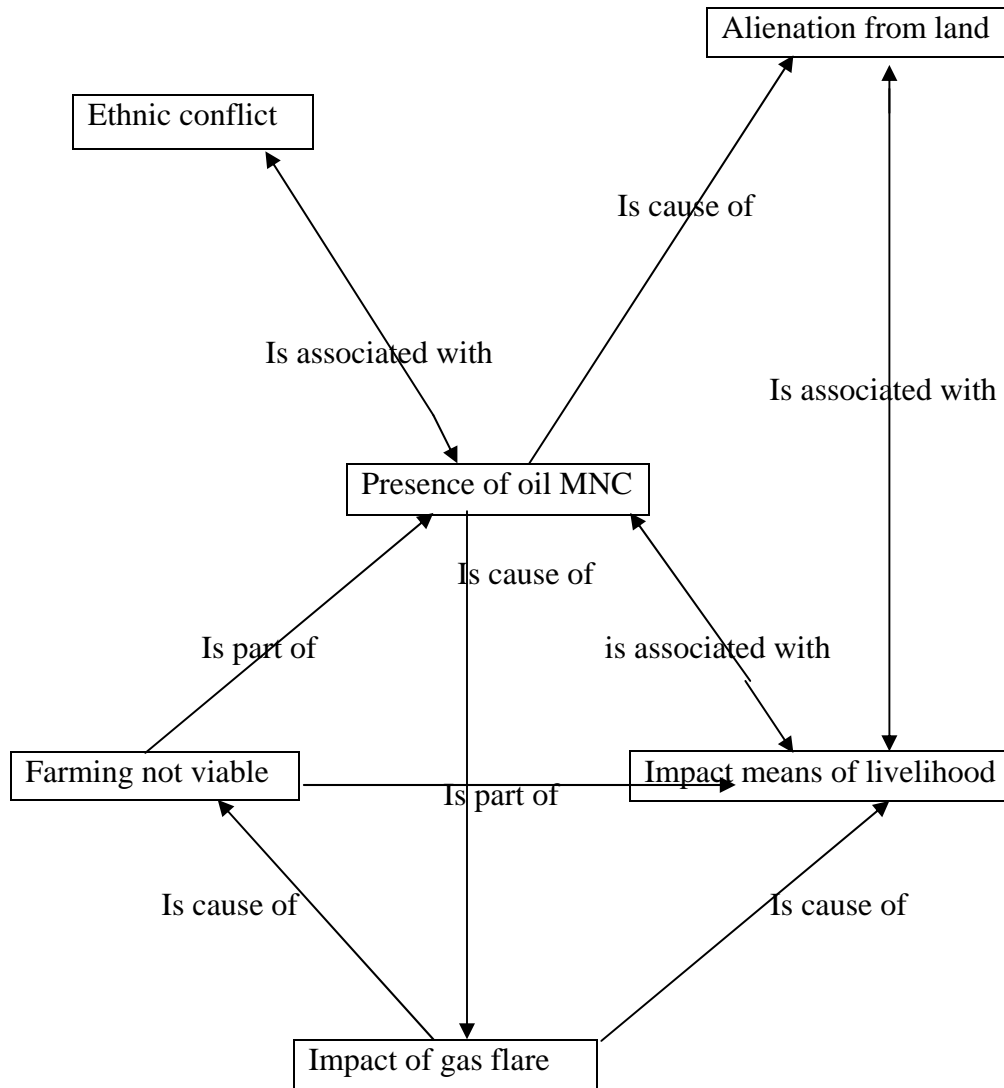
## **6.8 Qualitative Analysis Using Atlas.ti.5.0**

In this section, as highlighted in Chapter four, Atlas.ti 5.0 qualitative software was used to illustrate the relationship between the different variables and to show that the location of MNCs to countries of the South does not necessarily bring development to the place and the people. Instead, only a few people benefit, while the majority of the

population is marginalized, alienated and left without access to basic amenities and necessities of life. In part, the analysis in this section supports the literature on the negative consequences of oil exploration in the region, and highlight the importance of the narratives of the participants in the in-depth interviews.

The analysis focuses on the impact of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region, resulting in “alienation from land,” “poverty due to impact on land,” and “ethnic conflict.” I selected these variables based on the negative consequences of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region. For example, responses from participants indicate that they have been legally alienated from land, have become poor, and ethnic tension/conflict is on the rise as a result of the presence of oil MNCs. The objective of using these variables is to illustrate how each one of them “is associated with,” or “is a cause of,” or “is a part of” other variables. For example, I chose the independent variable “poverty” to show how poverty in Obelle and Obagi communities is associated with the presence of oil companies, alienation from land, environmental pollution, and ethnic conflict.

### 6.8.1 Presence of Oil MNCs



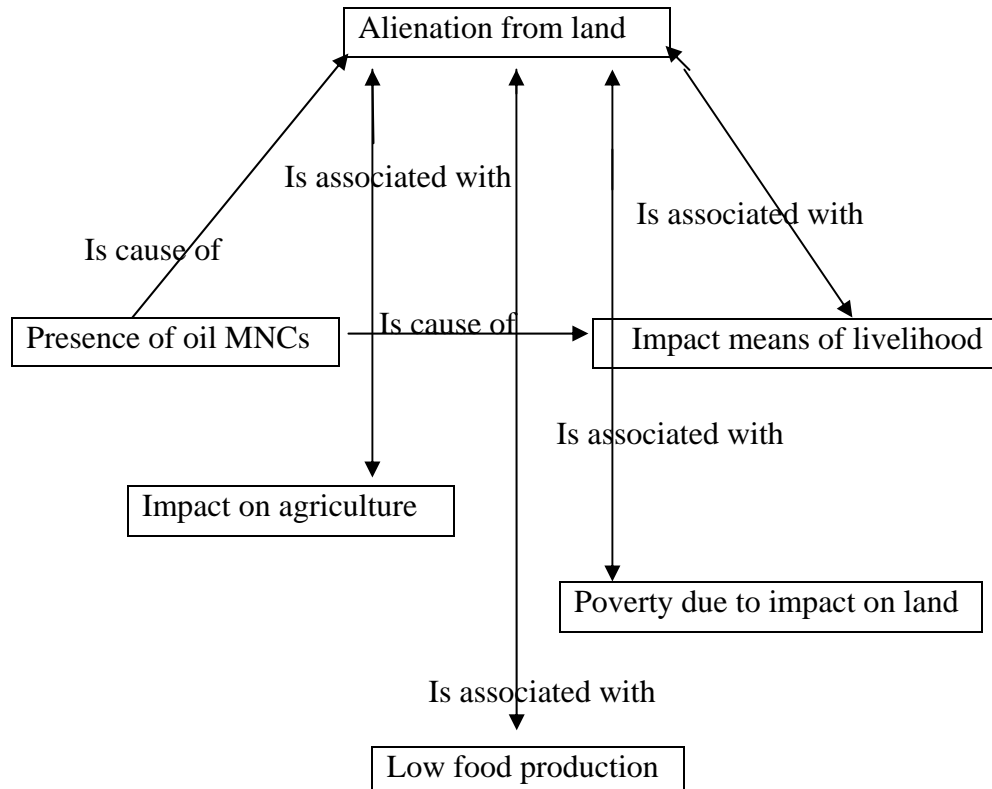
**Diagram 2: Network View of the Presence of oil MNCs**

In addition to selecting the variable “presence of oil MNCs” I also selected five other variables that are associated with and/or a part of the consequence of oil exploration activities in the region. These variables include “alienation from land,” “impact on means of livelihood,” “impact of gas flare,” “farming not viable,” and “ethnic conflict.”

Diagram Two illustrates the relationship between the presence of oil MNCs in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and five other variables, which include alienation from land, impact on means of livelihood, gas flare and its consequent impact, non-viability of farming as an occupation, and ethnic conflict/tension. From Diagram Two, the presence of oil MNCs does not necessarily bring about development as it is assumed (Saro-Wiwa, 1992). Instead, the diagram shows that the presence of oil MNCs in the Niger Delta is the cause of people's alienation from their land, which ultimately impacts on their means of livelihood, as is the case with Obelle and Obagi communities where the traditional means of livelihood is farming. Consequently, alienation from farmland is associated with a negative impact on people who depend on the land as a means of livelihood. The diagram also shows that the non-viability of farming as an occupation is partly a consequence of locating oil MNCs in the region; the fact that farming is no longer viable is also part of the reason why people's means of livelihood are negatively impacted rendering them incapable of providing the basic economic needs for their households. The location of oil MNCs has also been associated with environmental degradation; in the case of Obelle and Obagi communities, oil MNCs are the cause of environmental pollution, specifically through gas flares and oil spills, as shown in Diagram Two. Therefore, the location of oil MNCs in the region is the cause of gas flares. Also, gas flare is one of the reasons why farming is not viable and this ultimately affects the people's means of livelihood. The diagram further shows that the location of oil MNCs in this region is associated with ethnic conflict and tension within and between the communities in this region. The explanation given for this is that since the land is no longer accessible for farming and the location of oil MNCs in the region has caused a negative impact on the people's means of livelihood, people are now

clamouring for the little that is available. They are fighting each other over the ownership of the land where oil wells or flow stations are located in order to receive some oil royalties from the government and oil MNCs.

### 6.8.2 Alienation from Land



**Diagram 3: Network View of Alienation from Farmland**

The variables in this section are “alienation from farmland,” “impact on means of livelihood,” “the presence of oil MNCs,” “impact on agriculture,” “low food production,” and “poverty due to impact on land”

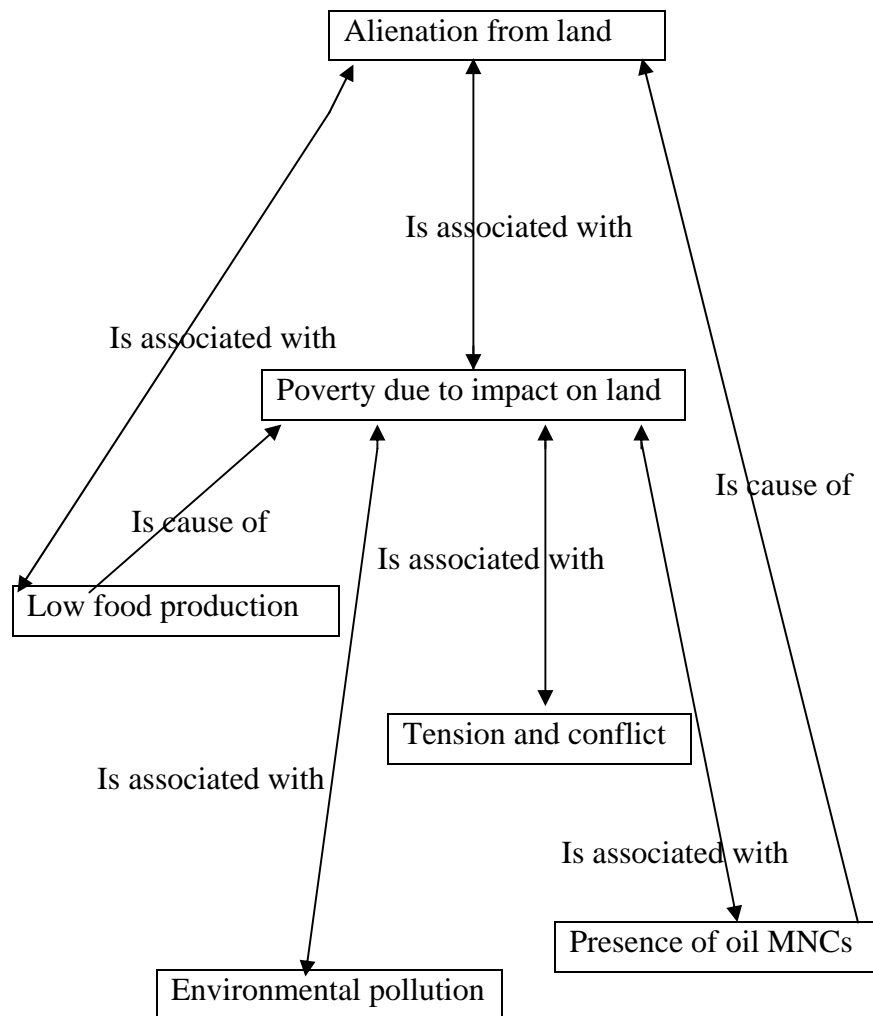
Diagram Three illustrates the relationship between the variables. The diagram shows that alienation from land is associated with the impact on the means of livelihood, which is caused by the presence of oil MNCs in the region, ultimately causing alienation from



land as shown in Diagram Three above. This alienation is supported by the Nigerian Land Use Act of 1978, which has dispossessed the people of any right to ownership of land in the region. The diagram further shows that alienation from land is part of the negative impact on agricultural production. Consequently, the negative impact on agricultural production is in part due to the alienation of people from farmland. Low food productivity on the other hand is associated with alienation from farmland. When the local population is alienated from the land, the means of livelihood is also negatively impacted since farming and other agricultural activities are the mainstay of the local population in the Niger Delta region. The diagram also indicates that there is a relationship of association between poverty and alienation from farmland. Poverty is associated with alienation from land because, when people do not have access to farmland, their means of livelihood are negatively impacted, as agricultural production decreases as a result. This situation, in my opinion is a recipe for poverty, as the people are rendered unable to provide the basic necessities for their families, and instead, become economically dependent.

### **6.8.3 Poverty due to Impact on Land**

The variables in this section include “poverty due to impact on land,” “the presence of oil MNCs,” “alienation from farmland,” “tension and conflict,” “environmental pollution,” and “low food production.” The following diagram illustrates the associations among the variables, especially in relation to the effects of the variables on poverty.



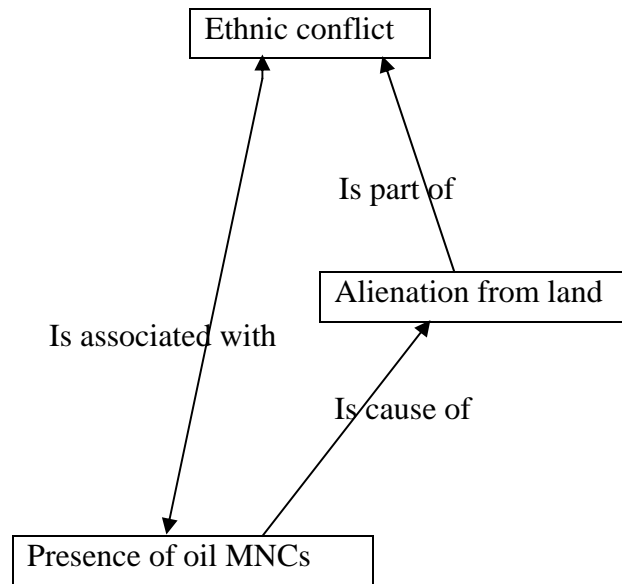
**Diagram 4: Network View on Poverty**

The above Diagram Four illustrates the relationship between poverty due to the negative impact on land and five other variables, which include the presence of oil MNCs in the Niger Delta, tension and conflict, environmental pollution, low food production, and alienation from land. The diagram shows that poverty due to the negative impact of oil exploration activities in the Niger Delta region is associated with the presence of oil MNCs, which is a cause of alienation from land in the region. The diagram also shows that poverty is associated with alienation from land. Accordingly,

people whose mainstay is agricultural production are rendered poor if they do not have access to adequate and fertile land. Poverty in the region is also associated with tension and conflict, within families; within and between communities/ethnic groups; and between local communities and the government on one hand, and between the local communities and the oil MNCs on the other. When breadwinners and co-breadwinners are so poor that they cannot provide the basic economic needs for their households, there is usually tension as indicated by some of the participants of the in-depth interview part of my study. On the other hand, the inability to provide for their households has also prompted the local population to agitate for compensation from the government and oil MNCs. Environmental pollution and degradation is associated with poverty as shown in the diagram above. Furthermore, Diagram Four shows that alienation from land is associated with low food production, which in turn causes poverty as the people are unable to produce enough for sustenance and sale.

#### **6.8.4 Ethnic Tension and Conflict**

The variables in this section include “ethnic tension and conflict,” “presence of oil MNCs” and “alienation from land.”



**Diagram 5: Network View of Ethnic Conflict and Tension**

Diagram Four illustrates the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variables. In the diagram, ethnic conflict or tension is associated with the location of oil MNCs in the Niger Delta region, while the location of oil MNCs in the region is a cause of land alienation; this is, in turn, a part of the reason there are tensions/conflict among and between classes/ethnic groups and also within families. Consequently, one could argue that the location of oil MNCs in the Niger Delta region has exacerbated ethnic tension and conflict in Nigeria, but particularly in the Niger Delta.

## 6.9 Discussion of Results

This chapter is presented in several sections in order to illustrate and analyze the effect of oil MNCs’ activities on the people of Obelle and Obagi using their own voices. Having presented the situation in the participants’ voices, I have also focused my analysis on a theme, namely “violence and brutality” in the Niger Delta region resulting

from the conflict between oil exploration activities and attempts by local citizens to demand adequate compensation for the destruction of their environment and their means of livelihood.

The decision to focus on this theme, in addition to the sections I presented and analyzed above, was informed by my three proposition (as outlined in Chapter 3) and the objective of my study, i.e., to examine how the uneven application the processes of globalization as implemented primarily through the activities of oil MNCs in Nigeria have impacted on the individual and collective lives of the people of the Niger Delta, especially women. Further, I examine if oil extraction activities in the region have exacerbated ethnic and class tensions.

When grouped together, the different sections presented above speak to the state of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the resultant consequences of oil related activities in the region, specifically in Obelle and Obagi communities. I presented and analyzed the data in the different sections in order to enable me to assess proposition number one which states that “globalization, which is the latest form of capitalist expansion, intensifies economic, social, and political inequalities by privileging the private over the public sphere and by marginalizing the actual and potential importance of the common population.” Looking at the narratives from the field participants and listening to their voices, I posit that the state of oil exploration and extraction in Obelle and Obagi has brought about marginalization, alienation from the land, economic hardship, environmental degradation, pollution of the land, water, and air, and health issues for the local population. In the creation of a conducive environment for foreign investment, the state has essentially dislocated the local people

and alienated them from their land and means of livelihood. This action prompted

Interviewee Number 18 to note:

In the area of land, since the Elf came here, they have taken all the areas we used to farm on. And since the company is not assisting us financially there is no money to use and buy land from other communities. You see that the company is now rendering the women of this area wretched. The land has been taken away and those ponds that they used to manage with; there is no fish inside them today because of the oil. Because when it falls into the pond, it kills a lot of fish! So we see that the fishes don't yield inside the oil.

Consequently, one could argue that the forces of globalization have privileged the private over the public sphere through economic policies like trade policies and structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), which ultimately further the marginalization of the poor masses, especially women and children. International trade policies do not adequately establish trade laws that protect local citizens; instead, the attention is focused on how MNCs can maximize profit and efficiency of human and material resources in host communities/country to the detriment of the poor people. SAPs on the other hand, have basically resulted in the poor of the world becoming poorer and marginalized from their means of livelihood (Welch, 2000). Generally, SAP policies require countries to devalue their currencies against the dollar, lift import/export restrictions, balance their budgets and not overspend, and remove price control and state subsidies.

Devaluation makes local goods cheaper for foreigners to buy and theoretically makes foreign imports more expensive. Balancing national budgets can be done by raising taxes or by cutting government spending, resulting in deep cuts in programmes like education, health and social care. Also, the removal of subsidies is designed to control the price of basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. By devaluing the currency

and simultaneously removing price controls, the immediate effect of SAPs is generally to hike prices up, increasing poverty to such an extent that riots are a frequent result. The situation is no different for Obelle and Obagi communities since the Nigerian government is currently adhering to the principles of SAPs; the environment and means of livelihood for the indigenes in Nigeria have been negatively affected by the activities of oil MNCs. These communities have also witnessed their share of violence and riots in the hope of bringing about a change in the status quo. In general, SAPs hurt the poor most because they depend heavily on the services and subsidies that are no longer available. As Welch (2000) noted, the IMF and World Bank have, in effect, demanded that poor nations lower the standard of living of their people in favour of debt repayments to the World Bank and IMF.

Proposition Number Two states that political and economic forces at international and national levels have impacted on development trends in Nigeria, resulting in persistent and continuous inter- and intra-ethnic conflicts and class struggle. This hypothesis was intended to enable me to examine if the activities of oil MNCs in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria exacerbate ethnic tension/conflicts and class struggle. As with Hypothesis Number One, the different sections describing the state of oil exploration in Obelle and Obagi, and the themes on violence and brutality were employed to address Proposition Number Two. On the basis of my analyses, I posit that the activities of oil MNCs in the communities have not resulted in any tangible development; rather, they have adversely affected the local population. About 90 percent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings and 80 percent of the federal revenue is from the Niger Delta region's oil wealth, yet the region has remained backward, undeveloped and

poor, and lacking the basic necessities of life. The local population here is saddled with all kinds of pollution, marginalization and alienation from adequate means of livelihood.

For example, Interviewee Number 24 noted that

The response from the government and oil company has been minimal in the sense that the petitions of the people are not actually been met and the few things they do turns out to be grossly inadequate. So, there is still some room for improvement, there is still need for more effort by this company and the government.

Nnoli (1978) observed that, where there are little or no resources, people scramble for the little there is, and this often leads to conflict. In other words, competition for scarce resources, either development or economic resources, is one of the principle reasons that ethnic groups and classes in Nigeria fight among themselves. In the particular case of the Niger Delta region, ethnic groups and classes come into conflict with each other due to economic competition for the oil royalties from the oil MNCs and/or the Nigerian government. A succession of Nigerian military regimes has survived as a result of the huge oil revenue, which they appropriate for themselves. The military has engaged in many negative activities, including the instigation of ethnic group conflict, the support of one ethnic group with sophisticated weapons against another in times of ethnic/communal clashes, and the brutalization of the local population who are perceived to threaten the production activities of oil companies in the Niger Delta (Apter, 1998 and Ekine, 1999).

In the responses to the question on what is responsible for the ethnic tension and conflict in the region, people responded that conflicts occurred because of the scramble for the royalties from the activities of oil exploration. Interviewee Number 13 summarized the situation as follows:



At times when the village people will need something from the company, they will refuse and the people can go for rioting. There are also problems between Obagi people and their neighbours, like the problem between Ogbogoro and Obagi as a result of land; some of them were dragging land because Elf people have occupied the place. I cannot even tell who owns it but these people will say that that land belongs to us and the other people will say that that land belongs to us so that they will claim the damage or royalty from the land. So, it also causes conflict between village and village. Like the recent one we are having now, Umuachi and Umuokpru. It is land case that is causing the problem. One group will say that this land belongs to us, that the oil well inside that place is our own so they will eat it alone and the other people will say that land is their own and the oil well is our own, so it does not belong to you. And it is causing problems in the village. Like I said, there is money that the company pays to the villagers but at times they are reluctant of doing it until the youth or the families go to rioting before they will now call a meeting and adhere to it. Like two years ago, we had such incident. Youth go to rioting and the company people invited MOPOL and army and in the process of shooting each other, they shot a lady passing by and she died.

The analysis of the responses from the interviewees indicate that political and economic forces at international and national levels have impacted on development trends in Nigeria, subsequently resulting in persistent inter- and intra-ethnic conflicts and class struggles. Consequently, the findings endorse Proposition Number Two, considering that the location of oil MNCs in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria has not brought any tangible gains or development to the region. Instead, the quality of life overall has been compromised and socio-economic standards have diminished. Moreover, there is little access to basic needs, and families are often unable to provide for their household needs since oil spills and chemical toxins in the air, water, and land have destroyed their means of livelihood.

For the third proposition -- in gender-derived inequalities, household economic relations are a deeply contested terrain in which access to economic and environmental resources remain a bitter source of conflict and a source of social division in the family

and society – the aim was to examine whether access to economic and environmental resources is a source of conflict and social division in the family and/or society.

Upon analyzing the responses to questions under the assessment of the impact of oil exploration on the people's economy/income, I conclude that the inability to provide for the basic economic needs of the family often results in conflict within the family and is a source of social division in the society. For example, Interviewee Number 6, representing many other respondents, noted that:

My income has really changed. For example, I told you the land is no longer producing well as it ought to. If it were before, with a ridge of cassava, somebody could get up to four or five basins of garri and when you sell it, you will get enough money but now, hardly could you see one or two basins of garri. So in that respect, the income will decrease because of low production.

Consequently, with low productivity due to the pollution and lack of adequate access to farmland, breadwinners and co-breadwinners who cannot provide for their family's basic household needs might resort to conflict. For example, when asked if their economic situation has created conflict within their households and between spouses, Interviewee Number 18 said:

It has created a lot of problems because there are some times that the children will need money and the money is not there, you will see that there will be problems and sometimes there are some things you want to bring to the home but because of money you cannot afford it.

For Interviewee Number 6:

It has been creating conflict, when the money is not coming the way you expect it, it will create conflict, you will start pointing accusing fingers at each other.

When people cannot meet their basic household needs, do not have access to efficient and adequate amenities at the community level, and have their means of livelihood destroyed, there is bound to be tension and conflict over the scarce resources;

of course, someone has to take the blame. Consequently, Nnoli (1978: 69) observed that where resources are lacking or scarce, there is necessarily socio-economic competition among the different groups and classes. In the case of the Niger Delta region, family and community conflict has been blamed by the local people on the activities of the oil MNCs in alliance with the Nigerian government, both of which have been accused of being in partnership to exploit the region without adequate compensation to the indigenes. As Interviewee Number 21 noted:

We do not feel the presence of the government here. We have not had any responsible government since the 1960s. They can't even take care of the problem in the government house, let alone in the community. To tell you the level of negligence of this oil company, in January this year one of their tankers that came to lift crude oil pulled down some electric poles that rendered the community into darkness and up till now they have not done anything to solve this problem. They have turbine and they have refused to give us electricity from it. Not even water; they have water over there so this will tell you the level of negligence.

The feeling of underdevelopment and devastation is common in Obelle and Obagi communities. In the four decades of oil exploration and extraction in the region, the area has remained backwards and neglected compared to other regions in the country.

According to Interviewee Number 18:

Since they (indicating the oil MNCs) came into this place, we thought things will change but instead of it changing, they are taking everything here and sending it outside. So the place that they are operating is still like that instead of improving, it is just like that.

Lacking basic needs and amenities, as well as the ability to provide for their household needs, most of the local population have resorted to riots, demonstrations and other forms of conflicts against the government, oil companies, and sometimes between and among families and different communities. Some of the participants in my in-depth interviews argue that it is only through tension and a conflict situation that the

government and oil MNCs would listen to and acknowledge the plight of the local citizens and then begin to remedy the negative consequences of oil exploration activities in the region.

#### **6.10 Summary/conclusion**

The qualitative analyses in this chapter reveal that the discovery of oil in commercial quantity in 1959 has not been as beneficial to the people of the Niger Delta in Nigeria as expected. Despite over 40 years of oil exploration and hundreds of billions of dollars of oil revenue, the economically abused peoples of the Niger Delta remain in abject poverty without even the most basic amenities such as water, health care, and electricity. For oil production to take place, land has to be expropriated for the construction of oil facilities and flow stations, a process that has become known as “land take” by the oil companies. Consequently, the land, which was the main source of livelihood for the local citizens in the Niger Delta who traditionally were farmers, has been taken over through the Nigerian land decrees such as the 1978 Land Use Act (originally Decree No. 6 of 1978)<sup>12</sup> and the Petroleum Act (originally Decree No. 51 of 1969)<sup>13</sup>. Although there were provisions for adequate compensation for citizens whose lands were taken for development or oil exploration purposes as stipulated under the Mineral Oils Acts, these provisions have not been kept by the federal government, which favours the creation of a positive environment for foreign investment to the detriment of its citizens.

The inability to provide for their families in the face of the alienation from land, inadequate compensation, and environmental degradation caused by the activities of oil exploration, have forced many of the indigenes in the oil producing Niger Delta to

revolt/demonstrate against the government and oil companies in the hope that the situation would change in their favour. The demonstrations and riots come with some benefits but at a very high cost, as some rioters get killed in the process, particularly when oil companies resort to using the military or supernumerary police force against the demonstrators. Demonstrators often shut off oil wells and locations, until the oil companies and/or government respond to the people's demands. The conditions and weak laws, which do not protect the citizens against environmental destruction and people's means of livelihood from the activities of oil MNCs, have resulted in the destruction of human life, flora, and fauna, as well as pollution of the air.

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- <sup>1</sup> See also World Bank (2000), "Defining an Environmental Development Strategy" pp. 2-3; World Bank, "World Development Report 1997," (see Table 1);" and Uche Onyeagucha, Oronto Douglass, and Nick Ashton-Jones, "The Human Habitat of Port Harcourt" in Benin City: Environmental Survey Final Report Phase I, Volume I, p. 164.
- <sup>2</sup> See also Ibim Semenitari, "Siege of the Sluts," Tell Magazine, February 23, 1998.
- <sup>3</sup> See section 2.4.1 *Ethnicity* and also endnotes numbers 40 and 41 in chapter 2 for a detail on the ethnic relations before oil exploration commenced. Ethnic tension between and among groups was based on access to land.
- <sup>4</sup> See Annie A. Brisibe, "African Tradition "The Identity of a People" With special focus on Globalization and its Impact in the Niger Delta." A paper written for Niger Delta Women for Justice and presented at the C. O. O. L. conference in Boston, USA. March 18, 2001
- <sup>5</sup> See Saro-Wiwa, K. (1992) *Genocide in Nigeria: The Ogoni Tragedy*. Lagos: Saros International Publishers.
- <sup>6</sup> See Bronwen Manby (1999). "The Price of Oil: Corporate Responsibility and Human Rights Violation in Nigeria's Oil Producing Communities" USA: Human Rights Watch. Pp 18 and 47. See also, endnote # 10 on p. 18 and endnote 91 on p. 47.
- <sup>7</sup> The alienation referred to here is a legal form of alienation since the people have lost ownership to their land as a result of the land Acts/decrees by the Nigerian government.
- <sup>8</sup> These declarations, which have been made by several ethnic groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, form the basis for their struggle for self-determination and ownership of resources, which has recently become popularly known as "resource control."
- <sup>9</sup> See Clark, Henry et al (1999), "Oil for Nothing: MNCs, Environmental Destruction, Death, and Impunity in the Niger Delta. A report from Essential Action and Global Exchange; Sokari Ekine (1999), "Women in the Niger Delta: Violence and Struggle." A Research Article written for *Niger Delta Women for Justice*; Sokari Ekine (2001), "Testimonies of Violence: Niger Delta Women Speak." *Niger Delta Women for Justice*, <http://www.kabissa.org/ndwj/Commentary/Sok2/sok2.html>; and Bronwen Manby (1999), "The Price of Oil: Corporate Responsibility and Human Rights Violations in Nigeria's Oil Producing Communities." Washington DC: Human Rights Watch.
- <sup>10</sup> The "Supernumerary police" are an arm of the Nigerian armed forces, specifically of the Police force whom the oil MNCs hires to protect their facilities and installations. This arm of the Police force has been accused of numerous brutalities and violence against the members of the communities in the Niger Delta who have raised concerns about environmental problems, protested oil companies' activities that are detrimental to their quality of life and economic self-sufficiency, requested financial compensation or employment, or threaten oil production in any way.
- <sup>11</sup> See Bronwen Manby (1999). "The Price of Oil: Corporate Responsibility and Human Rights Violation in Nigeria's Oil Producing Communities" USA: Human Rights Watch. See also, "Oil for Nothing: MNCs, Environmental Destruction, Death, and Impunity in the Niger Delta." A report from Essential Action and Global Exchange, January 2005; Sokari Ekine (1999), "Women in the Niger Delta: Violence and Struggle." A Research Article written for *Niger Delta Women for Justice*; Sokari Ekine (2001), "Testimonies of Violence: Niger Delta Women Speak." *Niger Delta Women for Justice*, <http://www.kabissa.org/ndwj/Commentary/Sok2/sok2.html>; Article 55, 56 and 58 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights; and Malcolm Keay (2002), "Oil and Governance: Focus on West Africa." UK: The Royal Institute of International Affairs.
- <sup>12</sup> The Land Use Act of 1978 stipulates that all land in the territory of each state of the federation is vested in the Governor of that State and such land shall be held in trust and administered for the use and common benefit of all Nigerians. See Manby, 1999.
- <sup>13</sup> The Petroleum Act stipulates that the entire property and control of all minerals, mineral oils and natural gas in, under, or upon any land in Nigeria or territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Nigeria is vested in the Federal government. See also Manby, 1999.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **7.1 The Relationship of Result to Theoretical Framework and Literature**

The aim of this study has been to examine if and how the uneven application of the international and national regulatory standards in oil production exacerbates ethnic and class tensions as well as gender inequality. It has also attempted to determine if and how oil exploration activities impacted on the individual and collective lives of women in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. In this chapter, the framework of intersection employed in this study is used to argue that global capital has exacerbated ethnic and class tensions, as well as impacted on the individual and collective lives of the women in Obelle and Obagi. Although it was originally thought that women were more negatively affected by these variables than men, the findings have indicated no significant differences in the effect of oil exploration for men and women. As outlined in Chapter 5 under the quantitative analysis of this study, 73.9 percent of women and 75.8 percent of men are negatively affected. Interestingly, though, the ways that they feel the effects are different. For example, women experience psychological and physical violence, which includes rape and have become economically dependent while men feel redundant in their role as providers for their families and sometimes experience brutality at the hands

of the military personnel deployed to the region to safe-guard the oil wells and installations.

Intersectional framework focuses on how different forms of oppression and marginalization cross paths to shape our life experiences (Henry et al, 2000: 25-28). This theoretical frame of reference allows the inclusion of all forms of analytical categories such as colonialism, imperialism, religion, sexuality, race, ethnicity, gender, and a number of other factors to make sense of people's experiences and in understanding inequality. Consequently, to gain an understanding of the effects of oil MNCs on the people of Obelle and Obagi they were asked about their experiences of oppression and conflict. Although Nigeria as a nation has been plagued by ethnic tensions and conflicts since before the commencement of oil exploration, the objective has been to see if the oil MNCs appropriates the situation for their own benefit by encouraging further ethnic and communal conflicts in their areas of operations. Another objective was to investigate the extent to which unstable, chaotic situations created by the tension/conflict as a result of oil exploration activities impacts on the women's ability to provide for their household needs, as well as nurture their families.

Using the political economy framework, which focuses on people's relationship to the means of production, an analysis was provided of how men and women in the Niger Delta region become slotted into the positions they occupy in Nigerian society. In other words, their relationship to the means of production ultimately defines their position within the Nigerian society. Also included in the analysis was the nature of social relations between ethnic groups in Nigeria, including the Niger Delta.



Since the study focused on power relations between international and national socio-economic and political groups in society, the data from Obelle and Obagi revealed that the people in these communities are marginalized and oppressed, on the bases of their ethnicity and/or geographic location. Some scholars such as Amadiume (1987), Saro-Wiwa (1992), and Boyd (1998) observed that, prior to the discovery of oil in 1956, the communities in the Niger Delta region were made up of affluent farmers and fishers who participated in the political and economic affairs of their region. However, this is no longer the case as they no longer have access to, or control of valued resources like the crude oil or the land in which oil is found (Brisibe, 2001), and have become economically dependent, unable to provide household basic needs for their families.

The power differentials emanating from the political and economic relations in Nigeria have created social inequality, have further divided the society into socio-economic classes, and have exacerbated ethnic and class tension. Most of the participants in the study noted that the oil MNCs deliberately incite communities or families against each other in order to keep them weak and distracted from the real source of their oppression. While this is on going, the oil MNCs continue their activities undisturbed. In view of this, the communities have become aware of what they call “tactics” of the oil MNCs and, consequently, know that the oil MNCs are one of the sources of their oppression and marginalization. The other source of their oppression that was mentioned is the Nigerian government, whom they accused of colluding with the oil MNCs in exploiting and marginalizing the local population. This awareness has resulted in collective resistance. Communities are currently seeking access to, and

control of their natural resources, in the hope that they would be able to relocate themselves to their place in the Nigerian socio-economic and political society.

The literature on political ecology views the political economy framework as a combination of the concerns of ecology and a broadly defined political economy. Consequently, this framework has been employed in the analysis of this study to show how the powerless people of Obelle and Obagi fight in order to prevent the oil MNCs, in alliance with the Nigerian government, from destroying their environment and foundation of their livelihood. The struggles of the local population for the preservation of their environment, resources and livelihood have been manifested in demonstrations, riot, confrontations, and sometimes dialogue with the government and/or the oil MNCs. Such strategies seek to influence policies that would protect all the stakeholders,<sup>1</sup> particularly those at the national level in the political and economic activities emanating from the exploration and extraction of crude oil from the Niger Delta region. On the other hand, “because the oil companies are operating joint ventures with the government, they have constant opportunities to influence government policy” (Manby, 1999: 2) to their advantage.

As highlighted in Chapters Two and Three, Nigerian state policies do not favour or protect the household economy of the general Nigerian public. Instead, with the adoption of SAPs, private export activities particularly in crude oil are favoured at the expense of food production. State policies do not protect the masses but favour MNCs’ environmental practices that do not protect the people against oil spillages, pipe blowouts, and pollution of the environment. The oil MNCs are free to use very old oil pipes, which criss-cross people’s homes and farmlands, pollute the air, water, and land

with toxic gas flares, and site oil wells near people's homes as shown in picture twelve and picture thirteen. Nonetheless, the Nigerian government does not have any control over these practices, nor does it have control over the terms of trade or have the financial and technological means like the oil conglomerates to invest in the sector.



**Picture 12: An Oil Well Located Close to People's Homes (note that the oil well head is very old and as such, susceptible to leaks and/or fire outbreak)**



**Picture 13: Three oil wells located close to people's homes (note that the oil well heads are rusted and the oil wells are not covered, posing a danger to both adults and children who may pass by at night considering that there is no electricity to light the community except for the constant flame from the gas flares).**

There has been a series of accusations by human and environmental rights groups against the oil companies for operating with double standards. It has also been argued, both in the literature and from my data that MNCs and TNCs operating in Third World countries are two-faced and perpetuate practices in their host countries/communities that are not permitted in their home countries/communities. The oil companies have been accused of using practices in Nigeria that would never be permitted in North America or Europe where they are headquartered. Accordingly, Interviewee Number 13 noted that if it were in a developed country, oil exploration and extraction would not be carried out nearer to residential houses. The respondent went on to suggest that, as is the practice elsewhere, those whose houses are closer to the gas flares or oil wells, should be relocated far from the activities of oil exploration.

Although Manby (1999: 5) has claimed that “development spending by the oil companies has also brought schools, clinics, and other infrastructure to remote parts of the country that might otherwise be far more marginalized by the Nigerian government”, it is also interesting to note that this is contradictory because, it is the government that erected the infrastructures such as primary and secondary school buildings in some of the communities in the Niger Delta. The oil companies, however, do not build schools for communities in the Niger Delta region. Instead, they assist the communities by providing additional classroom blocks for the already existing schools. For example, in Obelle, there is a secondary school built and owned by the government to which Shell donated a six-class room block (shown below in picture 14). In Obagi, there is a secondary school owned by the government but supported by Elf in the provision of seats and some other facilities. Nevertheless, the only primary school in the community

that was actually operating was owned by one of the interviewees who said the business venture school programme was not yielding any profit; as a consequence, the classrooms were not conducive to teaching. As a result, some teachers were forced to carry out teaching/learning under tree shades.



**Picture 14: A Six-room Class Block Donated by Shell to Obelle Community Secondary School.**

In most of the communities, there are no hospitals or clinics. For example, in Obelle and Obagi, when people are sick, they have to seek medical care elsewhere. In the few situations where the oil MNCs assist with some infrastructure and amenities, “many of these projects are inappropriate for the needs of the communities where they are sited, and others are incomplete or shoddily carried out” (Manby, 1999: 5-6), while some only exist on signboards as was the case in Obagi. Accordingly, some of the Interviewees noted that when the oil companies under take a project in the community, it is often not completed or it is done haphazardly like the six-room class building above with no toilets, urinary, electricity, furniture, or books.

In its four decades of political independence, Nigeria remains severely underdeveloped, with the majority of the people not having witnessed any significant improvement in their living conditions. In the Niger Delta, the situation is more acute in

view of the activities of oil MNCs, which are compounding the problem. The condition in the region has unleashed forces of political instability, unrest, alienation, and ethnic conflicts within the nation.<sup>2</sup>

The workings of the political and economic forces on international and national levels as a result of the uneven application of the processes of globalization have exacerbated inequalities and ethnic divisions in Nigeria. This has also resulted in continuous inter- and intra- ethnic conflicts within Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta region, as the poor masses resort to ethnic conflicts with the hope that new economic and social structures will emerge that will at last stem the hemorrhage of the loss of the wealth from their lands. Falola and Ihonvbere (1988: 11) argue that in order to survive the consequent pathologies of the relationships in a capitalist economy, those badly and highly impoverished resort to riots, rebellion and guerrilla wars in order to draw attention to their plight, and to fight the forces of globalization to be able to compete effectively with others both economically and socially. Examples of such recent riots/rebellion include attacks against oil facilities and kidnapping of expatriate oil workers in the Niger Delta region during the first week of November 2006 (Shirbon 2007). Citizens often hope that by raising awareness of their situation through such acts, new structures will be put in place to ameliorate the effect of poverty and government mismanagement in contemporary Nigerian society. As a consequence, power redistribution would be more favourable to the poor masses, the majority of whom are women and children.

In the face of the threat to oil production caused by some of these protests, the Nigerian government has created a number of special task forces to ensure security in

the oil producing areas (Ogoriba and Kaiser-Wilhelm, 1998). The most notorious and brutal is the River State Internal Security Task Force created in response to the 1990s' Ogoni crisis. Similar security task forces in the Niger Delta region include Operation Flush in Rivers State, Operation Salvage in Bayelsa state, and Operation Sweep in Abia state, among others. The paramilitary Mobile Police, deployed throughout Nigeria, are also active in the Niger Delta region and, on occasion, the navy is used to maintain order in the riverine areas, particularly when called upon by the oil MNCs. The oil companies on their own part have hired "supernumerary police," some of whom are armed by the oil companies,<sup>3</sup> to operate within the perimeter fence of oil facilities. In addition to this, the oil companies also hire private security firms for routine security provision, as well as local "guard" hired from among landholders across whose land pipelines run or where other facilities are built.

Boyd (1998: 53) noted that "a succession of Nigerian military governments have survived as a result of the huge revenues generated by oil, and the military leaders themselves have routinely benefited from oil revenues, making millions and millions of dollars." Consequently, "any movement that threatens this flow of money is bound to be silenced-extinguished" (Boyd, 1998: 53) and "wasted."<sup>4</sup> The position and involvement of the government in the crises in the Niger Delta region has led the local communities to believe that the government is in alliance with the oil MNCs to exploit and marginalize them in order to reap the benefits from the exploration of crude oil and its allied products.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, "local community members have regularly asserted that the oil companies use the awarding of contracts or development projects in a deliberate

effort to divide the communities among and within themselves and thus rule them without serious challenge to their operations” (Manby, 1999: 67).

In the end, whatever the intentions of the oil MNCs (it was not within the scope of this study to interview anyone from the companies directly), division and conflicts within and between communities in the Niger Delta often result from or are exacerbated by their presence. In addition, the military, by the command of the government and invitation of the oil MNCs, uses violence and brutality in order to undermine citizens’ struggles and “waste” citizens in order keep them powerless, divided, distracted, and weak.

## **7.2 Corroboration of Findings: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Atlas ti. Data**

The purpose of this section is to further corroborate and reiterate the findings from the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data. Although this is not a comparative study, the research sought to explore the reasons behind the differential effect of globalization on women and men, different age groups and ethnic groups as illustrated in the analysis in Chapter 5. Also note that gender analysis in chapters 5 and 6 is different. This is because, the research focused extensively on the experiences of local women as revealed through the in-depth interviews, analyzed in Chapter 6. Consequently, the quantitative methods in data collection and analysis are secondary to the qualitative methodology employed in the study.

Proposition Number One states “globalization, which is the latest form of capitalist expansion, intensifies the economic, social, and political inequalities by privileging the private over the public sphere and by marginalizing the actual and potential importance



of the common population.” Analysis from all the three methods employed in the analysis (quantitative, qualitative, and Atlas ti 5.0) illustrates that the presence and location of oil MNCs in Obelle and Obagi communities has been detrimental, bringing about negative consequences that affect local people’s ability to provide for their families and maintain a good quality of life. Consequently, this study supports Proposition Number One.

From the quantitative data, 87.0 percent of responses indicate that the presence of oil MNCs in Obelle and Obagi has resulted in toxins (in the air, land, and water), gas flares, and oil leaks, all of which pollute the environment and destroy the ecosystem, which is the main source of livelihood (see Table One in Chapter Five). Furthermore, 80.0 percent of the respondents indicated that the government has not done anything to cushion the negative consequences emanating from oil exploration and extraction activities. Responding to “what the oil companies have done to ameliorate the negative impact on the environment, 67.0 percent indicated, “Nothing has been done.”

Findings from the qualitative data illustrate that, despite the wealth produced from the communities, the local citizens still face the adverse effects of oil exploration and extraction; they live in abject poverty with no access to the most basic necessities of life such as potable water, electricity, and healthcare. In addition, the people of Obelle and Obagi are alienated from their land, with no rights to landownership as a result of the Nigerian Land Use Act of 1978. The environment is polluted with toxins, rendering the soil infertile for agricultural production and impacting negatively on citizen’s health.

The analysis using Atlas ti 5.0 shows that the location of oil MNCs in Obelle and Obagi has brought detrimental consequences to the local citizens as it has affected their land and agricultural production negatively, resulting in poverty and exacerbating ethnic and class tensions. (See diagram in Section 6.8.1 of Chapter 6).

Proposition Number Two states: “political and economic factors at the international and national levels have affected development trends in Nigeria that have resulted in persistent and continuous inter and intra-ethnic conflicts and class struggle.” This study rather strongly substantiates Proposition Number Two.

Findings from the quantitative data shows that 74 percent of the respondents indicated that the activities of oil exploration and extraction has negatively affected their lives, and negatively affected their access to basic needs, as indicated by 60.5 percent of the respondents in my field survey. Fifty-nine percent stated that oil exploration and extraction activities have resulted in shortages of food and poor quality of life. Responding to the question on what the government and oil companies have done to improve the quality of life, 81.5 percent stated, “provision of insufficient and non-functional facilities,” 36.4 percent stated that the response of oil companies is not commensurate with the damage caused by oil exploration activities, while 24.2 percent stated that the “oil company has not done anything.” Also, 94.5 percent of the survey respondents from Obelle indicated a negative impact of oil exploration and extraction activities while 55.8 percent with negative impact were from Obagi. Clearly, which ethnic group one comes from will determine how negatively one feels the effect of oil MNCs’ activities.

The qualitative data illustrate that ethnic and class tension/conflict has been exacerbated by the activities of oil MNCs, particularly as a result of what Interviewee Number 24 calls “oil politics.” Also, the analysis of the phenomenon using Atlas ti 5.0 shows that once land, which is the main source of livelihood of the people, is taken, tensions and fights will result between the various classes and ethnic groups over the scarce economic resources. Given these analyses and some literature such as Nnoli (1978), this study accepts Proposition Number Two and argues that political and economic forces at the international and national levels have impacted the development trends in Nigeria and have exacerbated inter and intra- ethnic conflicts over scarce economic resources.

Proposition Number Three states: “in gendered derived inequalities, household economic relations are a deeply contested terrain in which access to economic and environmental resources remain a bitter source of conflict and social division in the family and society.”

With about 60.5 percent of the in-depth interview respondents indicating a negative impact on their access to basic needs, it is clear that the people have become so poor that they cannot afford the basic necessities of life. Consequently, inability to provide for family will result in conflicts within the family and society. Corroborating these data, are the quantitative data, which indicate that the “oil politics” practiced by the oil MNCs, and the Nigerian government has eroded social cohesion, morality, solidarity and sense of community that was enjoyed before the commencement of oil exploration in the communities. The analysis of *Atlas ti. 5.0* also illustrate that alienation from land as a result of oil exploration activities would result in poverty as the people’s means of

livelihood has been taken and/or destroyed. The findings support Proposition Number Three.

### **7.3 Conclusion**

This study has shown that oil and oil wealth have become destructive and corruptive catalysts in Nigeria, leading to ethnic and class tension/conflicts, rampant materialism, negligence of the rights of minorities, and the militarization and devastation of communities in the Niger Delta region. Consequently, what was once a region of placid rural communities of prosperous farmers and fishers is now an ecological wasteland reeking of sulfur and filled with hydrocarbons; the creeks and water holes are poisoned by indiscriminate oil spillages and the land is ghoulishly lit at night by the orange flames of gas flares which are also seen in the day time since the gas is often flared continuously (Boyd, 1998). On the basis of the literature and the findings of the field study, this study posits that oil MNCs in Nigeria encourage and exacerbate ethnic tension and conflicts in the Niger Delta region in order to undermine, weaken, and distract the people from their actual oppression in order to give the oil companies the opportunity to carry out their activities unimpeded, even when these are contrary to the terms of agreement and/or environmental laws (Manby, 1999; Ogoriba and Kaiser-Wilhelm, 1998; and Interviewee Number 22).

Since the coming of the oil MNCs, the local communities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have had to deal with problems of oil spills on land and in the water, which have destroyed entire farmlands and marine ecosystems. In addition, the substantial negative health effects from exposure to crude oil and associated toxic pollutants include skin rashes, diarrhea, typhoid fever, cancer, an increase in birth defects, an interference

with women's reproductive ability<sup>6</sup> (Brisibe, 2001: 8, Interviewee Number 12), as well as premature deaths particularly where there is no access to or the means to afford medical care. The effect of oil exploration on people's health, as documented in the literature, is quite disconcerting because as noted by one author, "the Niger Delta records the worst environmental pollution in Nigeria, if not the world as a whole" (Brisibe, 2001: 1). The situation has been attributed to the activities of oil exploration and extraction in the region that result in oil spills, gas flares, pipe blowouts, leaks from worn-out/rusted oil pipes and well heads, and "toxins dumped in open burrow pits" (Interviewee Number 24) close to people's homes. The activities of oil MNCs have destroyed farmlands, polluted rivers and fishponds, resulted in floods that have sunk villages, killed many people particularly the young, old, weak, and frail. The mortality rate of the older population in Obelle and Obagi communities, as a result of the negative effects of oil exploration activities is of interest to me because, unlike my community in Obudu which does not have any oil well or flow station, I did not see many older men, older women or children throughout the duration of my field study in Obelle and Obagi communities. Having spent weeks living in these communities, I had actually expected to see quite a number of people in their late 50s and above. This prompted me to ask about this group of people, particularly when it became obvious that they were not present in the morning or evenings when they were to have been back from their farms. The answer, which I received, is echoed in the response from Interviewee Number 12 as stated above.

The explanation for the differences between Obelle/Obagi communities and my community in Obudu could be that, "crude oil contains thousands of different chemicals,

many of them toxic and some known to be carcinogenic with no determined safe threshold for human exposure” (Manby, 1999: 45). As a result, the effects on the mortality rate of the older generation in the Niger Delta region, which has an abundance of crude oil activities that expose the people to all kinds of hazards.

This study shows that there is a linkage between environmental degradation and poverty, which in turn impinges on the people’s ability to be economically self-sufficient and independent. Living in abject poverty and want, many people are dissatisfied with the lack of response from both the government and oil MNCs to their plight. In view of the dissatisfaction, the people in recent years have been agitating for an improvement in their situation through riots, conflicts, demonstrations, and occasionally dialogue with the government and/or oil companies. This has led to a common belief among the people that it is only when confronted, that the government or oil companies listen to and acknowledge the grave circumstances faced by the people.

In addition to the reality that their means of livelihood have been taken away or destroyed, women in the Niger Delta region face a double jeopardy. Firstly, their lives and those of their family members are in danger and, in some cases, the main breadwinner may be threatened or killed. Secondly, under such circumstances, the women are unable to provide for and take care of their household needs since it is their responsibility to nurture and keep the family together. Listening to the women tell their stories, one could hear in their voices some elements of resistance to the forces that keep them oppressed. Consequently, the women were asked to tell me the ways or strategies they have adopted for ameliorating their economic situation. The women in Obelle believe that when you educate a woman, you educate a nation; therefore, they have two

buildings (one is a girls hostel and the other one which is still under construction is a class room block) donated to the only secondary school in their community. For the Obagi women, they have an association whose main aim is to protect their families from the oppressive activities of oil MNCs in alliance with the Nigerian government. The activities include advocacy, confrontation, demonstration, dialogue and writing of memorandums to the government and oil MNCs on the state of affairs in their communities in relation to the activities of the oil MNCs.

It has been argued that “women are often empowered by the very same events and experiences that seek to destroy them, which may include becoming politically active, taking on new roles in defense of their property and maintenance of their households” (Ekine, 1999: 3). The Egi women have aligned themselves with the Egi Youth Council and have continued the struggle against violence, injustice, environmental degradation, and underdevelopment perpetrated by the alliance of the Nigerian government and oil MNCs. Demonstration by Egi women increased after the September 1998 incident<sup>7</sup> when the women demonstrated against ELF petroleum Nigeria limited. The Obelle women also see the need to continue the struggle against injustice and marginalization. However, they acknowledge the need for outside help from such organizations as international and national NGOs in view of their poverty situation, which prevents them from actualizing their desire to educate their children in order to give them a better future.

It is also worthy to note that the recent acts of kidnapping of oil personnel and armed confrontation with security forces by militia men in the Niger Delta region (Shirbon,

2007) is also a form of resistance to the detrimental consequences of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region.

#### **7.4 Recommendations:**

The main purpose of this thesis was to examine the uneven application of international and national regulatory standards in oil exploration in Obelle and Obagi and if these have exacerbated ethnic conflict and gender inequality in the communities. As outlined in Chapter 5 under the quantitative analysis, a statistical significant value of .087 indicates that both men and women feel the negative impact of oil exploration and extraction. The data from the study also revealed that people in these communities are oppressed and marginalized on the basis of their ethnicity and/or geographic location. Specially, findings from my quantitative analysis (see chapter 5) indicate a very strong relationship between ethnicity and the effect of oil exploration activities at a statistical significant value of .000. Also, with the adoption of SAPs by the Nigerian government, privatization, import substitution, and export activities around crude oil production are favoured at the expense of the well being of the citizens. Moreover, state policies/laws have not adequately protected local citizens but have favoured oil MNCs' environmental practices that pollute the environment and negatively impact on people whose main source of livelihood is their land. Overall, oil exploration and extraction has not benefited the indigenes of areas where they take place but has instead impoverished them further by destroying their land, which is a major source of production for livelihood.



Based on the findings of this study, the following are my recommendations for improving the situation in the Niger Delta region, particularly in Obelle and Obagi communities.

- Government in collaboration with the communities will need to set up a special agency to monitor the activities of MNCs in their oil exploration and extraction activities and ensure that regulations are adequately applied. In addition, the government regulatory agency will need to collaborate with an established international regulatory body to monitor the activities of oil multinational companies in the Niger Delta region.
- The oil companies will need to set up funds for the compensation of victims of oil spills and oil pipeline explosions. In addition, they will need to adhere to international and national regulatory standards for oil exploration and extraction, and ensure that adequate clean up is done after every spill or explosion. Equally important is the need for oil companies to stop locating oil wells and pipe lines close to people's homes and where there are no alternatives, oil companies will need to collaborate with the government to relocate the indigenous population.
- Citizens whose means of livelihood have been destroyed by the activities of oil exploration will need to be able to access basic means of livelihood such as health care, water, housing and food and the government and oil companies will need to ensure that their basic human rights are upheld. Consequently, the government will also need to ensure that citizens' basic needs are met and their human rights are respected.

These recommendations, if adhered to, will contribute to a sustainable economic and social development of the communities where oil exploration and extraction has destroyed traditional means of subsistence. They will also enable the government and oil companies to incorporate a philosophy of community development that will give members of local communities a better future. Equitable distribution of oil wealth among all the ethnic groups will also serve to ameliorate ethnic conflict. Overall, this will also create a positive environment for all the stakeholders in the oil sector.

Furthermore, the implementation of these recommendations would serve to prevent the persistent disruptive and destructive activities of opposition movements such as MEND as well as prevent the intensification and/or the emergence of more problems in the Niger Delta region, and Nigeria as a whole. Above all, it will create a positive economic and socio-political environment from which all the stakeholders will benefit. It should be noted however that although the implementation of these recommendations could improve the situation in Nigeria and the Niger Delta in particular, the recommendations do not address all the fundamental problems of the negative consequences of oil exploration and extraction. This calls for the fundamental restructuring of economic globalization process to target and focus more attention on meeting the needs of the disadvantage groups among local citizens.

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- <sup>1</sup> I have used this term to refer to the competing actors who seek to influence state policies at national and international levels in the contemporary human-environment interaction. In the case of oil exploration and extraction in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, the stakeholders include the government, the communities in the Niger Delta region, the oil MNCs, national corporations, NGOs, multilateral agencies, and foreign governments.
- <sup>2</sup> For a similar idea see Toyin Falola and Julius Ihonybere, *Nigeria and the International Capitalist System* (Denver, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 1988).
- <sup>3</sup> See Manby (1999), *The Price of Oil: Corporate Responsibility and Human Rights Violations in Nigeria's Oil Producing Communities*. On page two, she argued that "because the oil companies are operating joint ventures with the government they have constant opportunities to influence government policy, including with respect to the provision of security for the oil facilities and other issues in the oil producing regions."
- <sup>4</sup> See Manby (1999), *The Price of Oil*. It has been documented that the Niger Delta region has become a militarized zone so as to respond to and punish any group that resists the production of oil. The government justifies this action as a security crackdown to maintain law and order.
- <sup>5</sup> A researcher with the Human Rights Watch in the US has documented the conflicts and crises in the Niger Delta region that illustrate the involvement of the oil MNCs, which ultimately led to violent military and police action. (See Manby (1999), *The Price of Oil*. Pp. 65 to 68). Also see Felix Tuodolo Ogoriba and Timi Kaiser-Wilhelm, *Kaiama Declaration, 1998* (The Kaiama Declaration is a communiqué that was issued at the end of the "All Ijaw Youths Conference" which was held in the town of Kaiama on 11<sup>th</sup> of December, 1998, declaring their stand on the activities of the oil multinational corporations in alliance with the Nigerian government after their deliberation on the best way to ensure the continuous survival of the indigenous peoples of the Ijaw ethnic nationality of the Niger Delta within the Nigerian state. This communiqué was signed by Ogoriba and Kaiser-Wilhelm for all the participants).
- <sup>6</sup> Interviewee Number 12 noted that as result of the activities of oil exploration, "we are not seeing the old men and women again. It kills them. It hurts them in their bodies. Even some women now you will see the women who are able to born, but you cannot see them having children again because of the effect of the heat. Brisibe (2001) also noted, "There have been reported substantial apparent increases in birth defects" in the Niger Delta region. Further, she stated, "Inhalation of high levels of crude oil fumes can lead to adverse effects on the nervous and respiratory systems, sometimes causing life-threatening chemical pneumonitis and other systemic effects. In the Niger Delta, oil particulates have been emitted into the atmosphere from burning waste pits. These pits also contain drilling fluids with pentachlorophenols, which when burned are a formation pathway for tetrachlorodibenzo-dioxins. See the Center for Economic and Social Rights on Rights Violations in the Ecuadorian Amazon: "The Human Consequences of Oil Development" Vol. 1, No. 1, Fall 1994. This articles stated: "Constituents of crude oil ingested in water or food, such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) compounds, have been linked to adverse health effects ranging from cancers to toxic effects on reproduction and cellular development." See also, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS), 1993, which states: "The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that exposure to a PAH water concentration of 2.8 nanogram per liter corresponds to an upper-bound lifetime risk of cancer of one in 1 million. This risk could be significantly increased through added skin and inhalation exposure."
- <sup>7</sup> In September 1998, about 7,000 Egi women gathered in the streets and marched towards ELF's gas plant in protest of the atrocities that were being committed against them and their environment by the oil company and the Nigerian government. Their demands included payment and compensation for lands seized and the damage caused by pollution. They also demanded a reliable water well and electricity, as well as recruitment and contracts for local indigenes and scholarships for their children. Unfortunately, ELF had blocked the road with the help of about 100 mobile policemen, preventing the women entry into the premises of the oil company. The women did not record any tangible result from their protest and have since been accused of trespassing on their own land and the local police and oil personnel have continued to harass them. Despite the current situation, the women have continued the struggle to protect themselves, their families and property by aligning with the youth council against the oil company and the Nigerian government.

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## APPENDICES

### i. Questionnaire

#### Section One: Demographic Particulars

1. Respondent's name: (optional/pseudonym)
2. What is your date of birth?
3. What is your local government?
4. Language(s) spoken at home.
5. Marital status?
6. Number of children (if any).
7. Number of children in paid employment?
8. Number of children in school?
9. Highest educational qualification?
10. Are you gainfully employed?
11. Previous occupation?
12. Reasons for leaving your previous occupation.
13. Current occupation?
14. Annual income (estimate)?
15. Are you satisfied with your current job? [ ☐ ] Yes; [ ☐ ] No.
16. What is your ethnic group? .....
17. Where did you spend your childhood? .....
18. How long have you lived in Port Harcourt? .....
19. Which neighbourhood do you live in Port Harcourt? .....

#### Section Two: Impact of oil exploration on quality of life

20. Is there oil exploration in your community? Yes [ ☐ ]; No [ ☐ ].
21. What is the name of the company?
22. How long has oil exploration been carried out in your community?
23. How has oil exploration affected your life?
24. What were some of your experiences before oil exploration in the Niger Delta?
25. What has been your experience since oil exploration commenced?
26. Has your access to basic needs (such as water, health-care, food, electricity, income, agricultural production and land) changed?  
If yes, state how.....
27. What do you think is responsible for these changes (if there are any)?

#### Section Three: Impact on the people's culture

28. Has oil exploration brought in diverse people to your community?
29. Has this affected your traditional ways of doing things?
30. If yes to above question, in what ways?
31. Has it affected other aspects of your social life?
32. If yes to above, what are these aspects of your social life?

#### Section Four: Ethnic Tension

33. Has there been any ethnic tension and conflict between members of your community and members of other communities?
34. Has there been any communal tension/conflict between and among members of your community?
35. If yes to the above question, please state what form the tension/conflict has taken.
36. What do you think is responsible for this ethnic tension and conflict?
37. What has been your experience during ethnic conflict?
38. What do you think can be done to reduce or eliminate ethnic tension?

#### Section Five: Impact on agricultural production

39. Have you ever farmed?
40. If “Yes” to above question, are you still farming?
41. If “No” to above question, why are you no longer/or not farming?
42. Do you have access to farmland?
43. Has there been a decrease or increase in your agricultural production
44. What has been your agricultural/farming experience since the multinational corporations started the exploration of oil in your community?

#### Section Six: Impact on economy/income

45. Do you have a steady income?
46. How has your income changed over the last 10 years?
47. Is your current occupation your main source of income or are there other sources?
48. Are you the bread-winner of your family? ☐ Yes; ☐ No.
49. If “Yes” to above question, has that constituted any problem in your household?
50. Has your economic situation created conflict within your household, and between you and your spouse (wife/husband)?
51. Do you contribute to your household economy?
52. If “Yes” to above, how much do you contribute?
53. What is the level of your economic contribution to your family and community?
54. How is this contribution distributed in the following areas:  
☐ Food; ☐ Health; ☐ Education; ☐ Others (specify).....

#### Section Seven: General information on impact on the environment and economic self-sufficiency of people in your community

55. What do you think is the impact of oil exploration on your environment?
56. What has the government or the oil multinational corporations done to address the impact?
57. What community strategies have been developed to challenge the negative impact of the activities of oil multinational corporations on the economic self-sufficiency of your people?
58. What services have been put in place to minimize the impact of oil exploration on your land?
59. What environmental protection strategies has your community put in place?

60. What is the response of the government or the oil multinational corporations to the improvement of the quality of life in your community in view of the impact on your land?
61. Are you satisfied with government response to your community's complaints about the impact of oil exploration on the quality of your life and land?
62. If "No" to above, what suggestions can you make to improve the situation?
63. Is there anything you want to say in addition to the above questions about the effect of oil exploration on you, your family and community?
64. Is there anything else you want to talk about that I might have missed?

Thank you for your cooperation



**UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN  
BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD**

<http://www.usask.ca/research/ethics.shtml>

**NAME:** P. Elabor-Idemudia (J. Adalikwu)  
Department of Sociology

**BSC#:** 02- 697

**DATE:** December 4, 2002

The Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the revisions to the Application for Ethics Approval for your study "Globalization, Ethnic Tension, Gender, and Class Struggle: A Case Study of the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria" (02-697).

1. Your study has been APPROVED.
2. Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Committee consideration in advance of its implementation.
3. The term of this approval is for 5 years.
4. This approval is valid for five years on the condition that a status report form is submitted annually to the Chair of the Committee. This certificate will automatically be invalidated if a status report form is not received within one month of the anniversary date. Please refer to the website for further instructions: <http://www.usask.ca/research/behavrsc.shtml>

I wish you a successful and informative study.

A blue ink signature of Dr. Valerie Thompson, written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Valerie Thompson, Chair  
Behavioural Research Ethics Board

VT/ck